

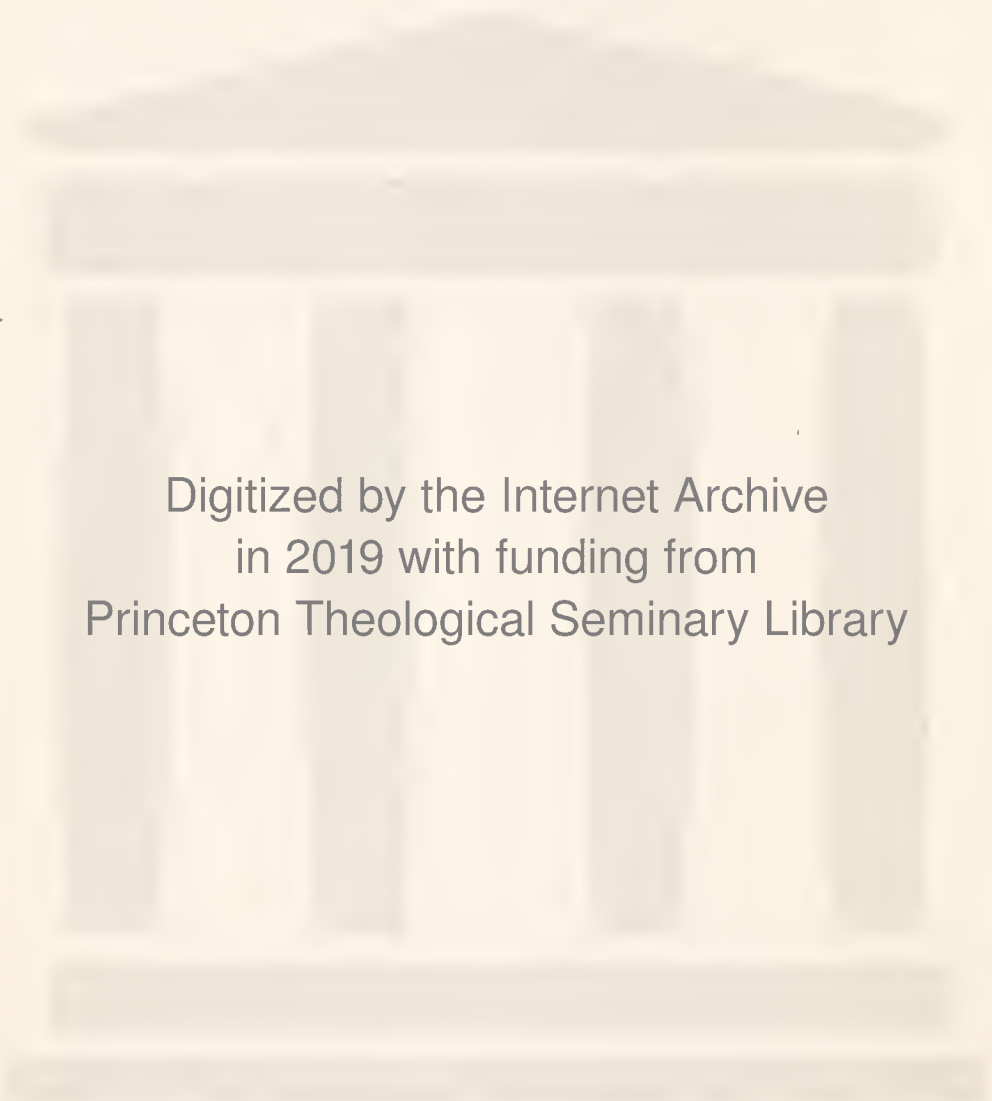




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Places of quiet strength,
and other sermons



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Fourth Church Pulpit: First Series

PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE

PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH

and Other Sermons

BY

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PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH. I

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To
CHARLES WOOD

Whose Life and Sermons when I was of
High School Age gave me Renewed Purpose and Zeal to become a Minister; and
Whose Spirit, Standard and Friendship have
been an Ideal and Joy to me ever since.

FOREWORD

For many years it was my custom to read a sermon a day by some one of the great preachers of the Scotch, English or American pulpit. The sermons of Chalmers, Newman, Beecher, Maclaren, Flavel, Liddon, Bushnell, William M. Taylor, Roswell D. Hitchcock, Frederick W. Robertson, Moody, Spurgeon, Selbie, Watkinson and others have been through the years a constant source of inspiration and personal help.

There is a question, however, whether the reading of individual sermons ever helps one directly in sermon preparation, but their indirect influence as to style, clarity, imagination and inspiration undoubtedly have far-reaching effect. If themes do not suggest themselves individually, and come fresh and clear to the mind, they seldom leave a marked impression upon a congregation.

Much of the work of preparation for my own pulpit has been fragmentary and irregular; not that it has been neglected, nor minimized, but the constant demands and interruptions of a large parish, together with repeated responsibilities from the Church and agencies at large have forced me to do my work at all times, frequently with limited time and amid diverting surroundings. Some of these sermons are the result of more study and thought than others; some merely the stenographic report, revised.

In reading over the proof my experience no doubt has been that of others, and is one of sincere regret that the attempt has been made to publish. Realizing as one must the loss which comes to all public utterance when separated from the personality of expression, the only possible reason for publishing can be that some may gain through these pages the inspiration which others have given me, and also that many who have heard these sermons may recall associations which have inspired and endeared.

Faithfully,

J. T. S.

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PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH

PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH

I

PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH

“They have forgotten their resting place.”
—JEREMIAH 50:6.

“They have *forgotten* their resting place.” These words were spoken by Jeremiah. You will find them in the fiftieth chapter of the prophecy that bears his name, the sixth verse. Let me read the preceding words that we may have a frame for this picture:

“In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God.

“They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

“My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.”

12 PLACES OF QUIET STRENGTH

The Scripture prompts us to consider this morning the subject of "Places of Quiet Strength." We are told that one of the quietest of all physical places is in the very centre of the cyclone. Have you ever seen a bird's nest swinging above the water-fall? Have you ever known a triumphant, quiet soul although living in the very midst of the rush and confusion of life? Let me read a hymn to you: Harriet Beecher Stowe never wrote more beautiful words than these:

"When winds are raging o'er the upper ocean,
And billows wild contend with angry roar;
'Tis said, far down, beneath the wild commotion,
That peaceful stillness reigneth evermore.

"Far, far beneath the noise of tempests dieth,
And silver waves chime ever peacefully,
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the Sabbath of that deeper sea.

"So in the heart that knows thy love, O Purest,
There is a temple, sacred evermore;
And all the babble of life's angry voices
Dies in hushed stillness at its peaceful door.

"Far, far away, the roar of passion dieth,
And loving thoughts rise kind and peacefully,
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, in Thee."

Such words are well nigh inspired, and impress upon us our morning truth.

There was a Hindoo woman, who, out of the chaos and darkness of her surrounding, found Christ and learned those words of Scripture:

“Peace I leave with thee; my peace I give unto thee, not as the world giveth give I unto thee. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Later she learned such words as these :

“Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest.”

and one day studying the songs of that great bard inspired by Jehovah, she read these words :

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters;
He restoreth my soul.”

Into her mind there came the inspiration of another song, and she took her pen and wrote :

“In the secret of His presence,
How my soul delights to hide.
O, how precious are the lessons
Which I learn at Jesus’ side.
Earthly cares can never vex me,
Neither trials lay me low,
For when Satan comes to tempt me,
To the secret place I go.”

and the words of that poem have gone around the Christian world in a hymn to quiet the troubled heart. Yes, a Hindu convert learned the meaning in our text : “They have forgotten their resting place.”

First, let us consider this fact, Jesus Christ’s definition of rest was not temporal nor confining. We say we will take a vacation. There ought to be a working

philosophy, or, a philosophy of work, so that in every business and in every life sometime during the year every individual soul might get away for a time from his or her accustomed task. We speak thus of a vacation. It seems adjusted to the age and day in which we live. Christ meant the vacation period of life to be a regular, constant experience of relaxation. We err when we merely call attention to the worshipfulness of the Sabbath Day, for God made the day, a time when rest should be given man. God meant the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath. He did not in His eternal philosophy divide time into seven periods and say we must take one-seventh to bow before Him. Not at all. He so constructed human life, body, mind and soul that the man needs one-seventh of life's time for rest, quiet, thoughtfulness and reverence, and thus He made the Sabbath for man.

God's system is seen in regularity and constancy. The day follows the night. The sun rises and the calendar tells us exactly when. We know that storms are a result of physical conditions. We have a great period of heat, and moisture rises in the air. Then the heavens become too heavy to contain themselves, and torrents come down to moisten the parched earth and refresh it again. It is God's law in action. The weather-bureau does not guess, but facts and conditions reveal and speak.

Last Sabbath afternoon I was going from one college appointment to another in the East, and a terrific storm came down upon us. I never saw it rain more furiously and continuously. Going through the streets of Old Cambridge our automobile had to go through

streams of water, but we had been experiencing two or three days of intense heat, and this down-pour was the natural result. God sometimes works in what may seem a catastrophe, but thoughtfulness reminds us that the regularity of forces are giving vent to pent-up conditions, for regularity is God's law. Now if God's law of order has made this world what it is and is continuing so to do, we must consider more thoughtfully the resting places which God has made in human life.

Have you ever stopped to think of what a wonderful thing sleep is? Our bodies, minds and nerves are worn out, but, when in the exhaustion of our forces we lie down and sleep, we awake perhaps eight hours afterward rested and face other tasks easily and willingly. We work hour after hour, on into the night, and are wearied again, and sleep comes and again we are rested. The great natural sources of life are the regular sources of recuperation, readjustment and recreation. These are God's great natural influences of power in the world. Why do we overlook this? "Thy people have forgotten their resting place."

There is nothing in all this world so beautiful as a little child. I cannot understand how those to whom God has not sent little children can possibly live on through life without adopting them. You are robbing your lives of the greatest blessing "home" can ever define! You are failing to enrich your life with the sweetest and holiest gift of God. O, men and women, think of it! It is not so much *for the child* that I speak now; it is for motherhood and fatherhood. There are few people who can grow up in a home without

children, without becoming supremely selfish. There are some, thank God, but very few. If God has not sent into your life the greatest gift He ever gives, in the form of a little child, consider seriously this truth. A baby's hand upon your face, as Victor Hugo pointed out, has more of God in it and more of human joy in it than any other touch of life. If you have not known it, think and pray about it. Children bring the joy and poise of life to a home. Life's resting places are not in the extremes, nor found on special occasions; not in the Niagara Falls, nor the Glacier Parks, nor even in the great rolling sea, but the natural gifts of God come right along life's way, in the ordinary, the commonplace, the near-at-hand.

Yesterday, looking out from my study window, I saw the far-reaches of blue Lake Michigan. For a moment I forgot it was Chicago and that the room was the study of the pastor of the Fourth Church; that we were here on the Drive; that those were apartment houses before me. I dreamed a moment and saw Venice, Naples, the Mediterranean. I saw before me places to which the world travels to gain beauty. Later in the day, I went by thousands of people, children playing in the sand, tired mothers and fathers lying on the grass. Great lessons are these, and how near at hand. Tens of thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands, filling this great city with one-fortieth of the people of the United States, live, happy and joyful, right here on the banks of the Lake. Then I thought of the blue lake again; of its beauty and expanse and glory. I joined in the mirth of children; sympathised with mothers and fathers talking with their children; saw

their love-looks as childhood and youth came back to them again. Ere I knew it I was thanking God for our city and our wonderful lake. What a beauty all about us! What a place in which to live! What a life to live with others. And my heart broke forth in its own song, unexpressed—"May Jesus Christ Be Praised!"

Yes, and it was all right here. We do not have to go away to enjoy it. I have had such a longing lately to stay here right through the summer, and have had to contend with myself to think it right to go away for rest and recreation. The longing of the soul took possession for the time in the joy of the present, just here where we live and where human hearts are suffering and glad, and where the ripple of the laughter of children outrivals the ripple of the wavelets of Lake Michigan. Yes, it is a wonderful place. The birds are singing here; the joys of life are here. Have we not forgotten? "My people have forgotten their resting place."

We get so tired with the duties of the day, with the cares of life, with the ordering of food, with the making of beds, with the tireless constancy of a telephone, with replies to questions, that we forget that there is a resting place in every home, even in a noisy apartment because partitions are too thin. *There is a resting place everywhere* to those who have the soul to live—"In the secret of His presence, where the soul delights to hide."

Yes, you say, "but we are living in a whirlwind." Well, make it a cyclone, if you will, but remember the calmest place may be in the centre of the cyclone.

“Quiet, Lord, my froward heart;
Make me teachable and mild,

Do we know the secret place? Have we forgotten “our resting place?” “In Thy presence is fulness of joy.”

It is wonderful how we can control conditions if we will. We sometimes have seen a dear old grandmother, whose quiet, lovely face was a benediction in the home, and in came a rollicking dirty-faced boy, dragging mud and everything that a boyish nature carries with it. But, the grandmother did not scold him! She said, “Donald, come here a minute,” and then with her dear lips and sweet face she kissed young Donald on the forehead, and he forgot his restlessness for a moment, and more quietly went up stairs to his room. Then he went down and kissed her dear face and said, “Grandmother, you certainly are it. I am glad I have you.” Is she not a benediction in his life? What gave that grandmother that poise? She did not like mud, nor care for his noise; she even missed some stitches in her knitting, but there was something in her soul that gave her poise and charm, for she had her “resting place,” not in the turmoil of the city without, but in the quiet of the soul within.

// Notice another thing. The resting place of God is not only a place of poise and quietness, but it is a great adjuster of the difficulties of human life. Get away, men say, from surroundings. See streams, look at stars, see mountains, behold the various colours of the ocean—do anything. This is all wholesome advice, if possible, but it is not the only way. The religion of

Jesus Christ is a great controlling influence so that when we cannot get away to the place of diversion we may find the adjusting force within and may be calm and strong—"In the secret of His presence."

It is said that when Secretary Hughes spoke in the recent Peace Conference, not frequently and in very few words, so controlled was his manner that many who had never known his type of life before said, "How can we get together?" It is wonderful to have a poise of life which puts wrangling natures at ease, and this without calling attention to personality.

Of course our lives would be happier from every standpoint if we could make things just as we want them. We can control our friendships but not our relationships in this world. If home were a little different; if relatives were less insistent; if there were not problems in the servant question; if wages were always according to our scale; if children were never irritable; if teachers were always ideal; if food were always cooked properly. But, this is not true to life. There are all kinds of difficulties and readjustments necessary in life, and life is just what we make it after all.

God says to us to-day, "You have forgotten your resting place." "I am a God who can meet conditions as they are." In this great contest of life there are those who are always destroying peace because actual things are not ideal, but the quiet place may be an adjuster. With it we may iron out the wrinkles and gain the smile of contentment. Paul said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." No man or woman has contentment given to

start with as a gift. Even Paul was a long time "learning" it.

This poise of the soul, this resting place, means that irritable mothers can somehow speak gently to children; that angry, unguarded fathers may learn patience, even if things are not just as they should be at home. Love is in his heart and poise means "fatherhood." The true father has a gentility, a greatness of the soul that will adjust conditions.

// A great musician can sit down at an organ and bring out rarest melodies and harmonies from minor keys. One of the most remarkable musicians I ever knew was a lady who once played the hymns for us at a Student Conference at Silver Bay, Lake George. I asked her if she could play the piano at the morning service. She said, "I will try." I knew she was a great musician, although there were many problems to contend with in the use of that old piano. When she tried it, there was a gasp. This particular piece of wood and ivory was so out of tune, it was impossible to play it. But, she studied it without saying a word. I was busy and fully intended to get a piano tuner, but had forgotten my intention, but she sat down at the piano the next Sunday morning, as the service opened, and played it perfectly without a single note of discord. I noticed she changed different octaves and notes, but not a single false note was struck, and every one was delighted. There was something in her touch anyway that was the soul of music. I said, "what did you do?" "I did not do much of anything," she replied. "I just studied the dear old thing the whole afternoon and learned it, and then left out the notes that were out of

tune and used the others. I really used about five hours on it, but you did not hear any discords did you?" What a lesson! Why, a poor musician, or a little life would have said, "You will have to excuse me. I have some talent. With such an instrument I would ruin my reputation." But not that rare soul! That mother who could hold in her arms worried, wilful children and could guide and watch them through all the years until they became noble men and women, looked at the old piano with its discords as something that could be easily controlled and conquered.

My dear people, such is life. Not what life is, but what *we are*. Have we not forgotten our resting place? Listen, once more. Of course, we do not want sorrow. Of course, we do not want sickness. Of course, we do not want limitations or difficulties or losses and misunderstandings. No, but *we have a resting place.*¹¹⁾ It is the place of poise and power and reserve, and these mean God. Look away sometimes at yonder mountain, or at the sea. Behold the rising sun which in its meridian strength draws water from the ocean into the far-away clouds. It does not make any noise. It rests in its mighty strength. When an automobile is out of order, it makes a great deal of noise; when it is in order, it is comparatively noiseless. How about the sun and the stars with their millions and billions of miles of infinite distances? Are they noisy, or fretful, or worried?

Have we forgotten our resting place? "In the secret of His presence." "Great peace have they that love Thy law." Ungodly people are noisy and perturbed, not Christlike souls. "Be still and know that I am

God." "My people have forgotten their resting place."
"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is
stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." "The
Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." "Let not your
heart be troubled." "Be anxious for nothing."

Let us *Remember* our "Resting Place."

II

THE FOUR-SQUARE LIFE

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”—MARK 12:30.

“And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth.”—REVELATION 21:16.

There is a four-square measure of life. There is in this definition that which is complete in human attainment and character. No one is perfect, and no one ever has been save Jesus of Nazareth, who was God incarnate. “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The true measure of a life is known in its four-fold character.

The four-square life is the life in which body, mind, heart and soul work for the highest and best. It is the life that is right and complete physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.

One of the important battles in history was won because the great general was wise enough to fight with a four-side front. That whole open line faced the enemy, but by some subtle and adroit gift of generalship, surmising the purpose of the enemy, he knew if they were to strike from the rear, and thus penetrate, to

oppose this he must form a square with fighting ranks facing every direction. The opposing foe, knowing nothing of this, sought to penetrate the left flank and met with resistance; they then sought the right flank and met with the same resistance. Finally, expecting to find the hollow opening, they attacked the rear to find the same opposition, for that general had made every side of that square strong for defence and the battle was won.

The great difficulty with human character is that men are so often only three-quarters men. The enemy finds the weak side. Men are satisfied with attaining an average standard in the comparative degree, but do not attain the standard which God has set up for character and right. They compare their own character with the character of others and seem satisfied with the comparative test. There is a weak side. Let us illustrate:

Take for instance a man with marked physical development. His chest is broad and full; his breathing is deep; his heart action regular. He has well-developed muscles in arms, limbs and trunk—all is perfect. In looking at his body we see an Apollo in strength and grace. He is able to meet every physical demand in life and meet it well. We look at him in admiration and wonder, but as we eat with him and converse with him, it happens that this Apollo in figure and giant in strength uses very bad grammar. He eats with his knife and leaves his spoon in his coffee-cup. We notice his linen and his finger-nails, and immediately say—"Where has he been brought up?" "What is he?" He knows nothing apparently except the life of the

prize-ring, and although he can give the nick-names of all the men in the fighting ring, and has all base-ball knowledge as well, he has little intelligence along other lines, and really feels very much out of place outside of his own group of society. True, he can wear a dress suit, but it does not look natural on him. He is a physical wonder, but otherwise we refrain from estimate. Does a man want his son to be that kind of a man? Physical attainment is only one side of the square of life. It is an important one, but it is not all.

A *second* man comes before us who is perfect mentally. He can talk upon any subject and talk intelligently. He is a student. He is not tiresome in his conversation, but is brilliant, even scintillating. Suddenly he coughs deeply and protractedly, and some one says, "He is not long for this world; he has no strength, no physique." Well, he has another side of the square, but has not the first side.

Then a *third* appears. His physical and mental development are all one could desire. Here, surely, is our man! He has a strong body and a splendid mental equipment. He is clear, thoughtful, analytic, wise, sympathetic. We have found our man, but, alas! we find this man of splendid physical and mental life is morally unsound. He disregards the truth which God's own Book has made essential, and which the jurisprudence of the ages has approved. We find he cares nothing whatever for the great laws of society. Morality means nothing to him. Life is simply a pleasurable affair in which the physical can have its own indulgence and freedom. Mentally, too, he is all one could desire, but the mind bears no sense of responsibility. He cares

nothing for the word "duty." He has no moral sense. If he breaks God's or man's law, it is merely a question of evading detection in his fear of punishment.

// Many years ago a lad graduated from one of our Eastern universities who had taken many prizes in that university. He was a youth far beyond his years in brilliancy of mind. He was an athlete of no small note in the Eastern athletic world, and he graduated among the best students of his class, but he was despised by every fellow-student; in fact, almost hated by many of them. He scarcely had a friend in his entire class. When his name was mentioned, the professors turned the subject and did not care to discuss him. Why? If you had gotten into the close confidence of one of those professors, he would have told you, with sorrow, that that boy was absolutely void of any moral character. He had broken every law of moral standing in this university, but had done it in such a slick way and covered his tracks so skilfully, that his works could not be proved. Everybody knew how rank his life was. He lived but a few years after graduation. Of course, he was a cynic. Of course, he had no good word for another. He was keen and brilliant; splendid on the athletic field, but he had no moral sense. He cared not for life, save as it afforded him satisfaction and pleasure. He was morally void. I do not think any lad ever had sadder parents. They were unconscious, thank God, of all that his companions knew of him."

Over against such a life, cite a young man whose moral sense is all one could desire—a man thoughtful of God's laws and to whom the laws of society have become the principles of his life. Such a one is

physically strong, mentally clear, and morally pure. We say, "There is my man!" But, wait a minute. There may be a hollow side to this life. God's law has made life four-square. It is not only the physical, mental and moral life, but we have an obligation to God which is mysterious and undefined, but which is vital if we are to have a four-square manhood. There is the *spiritual* life.

How many people in this world have just missed life's real meaning, because they have failed to adjust themselves to divine things as well as to the conditions of human life? They are careful, thoughtful, brilliant, but they do not see the great Divine Being who stands back of success. They have missed Him.

How many in human life are physically, mentally and morally equipped, who are missing the complete life because spiritual things have not been a matter of consideration with them. They are logical; they are philosophical; they respond to the real. They say they are materialists, in the sense that they want to know their ground, but the experience of faith is omitted. They do not see beyond the things that are material. They are not allowing the soul to search for the undiscovered. They have not the great power of the unattained. The defined in life controls the undefined. They fail to know that the mysteries of the soul's realities are more vital to us than the things we see and feel. The things we love, the books we finger, may be taken from us. The child who wraps you with his affection; our homes, dearer to us than all else,—every one of these things may be taken from us. The severings and separations of life relate to the material,

but the great infinite realities are always to abide with us.

A woman was standing this last summer in France by a little grave, for she had discovered that her boy's remains were there. She did not say a word. She stood silently by that grave, then returned to her hotel. "Do you want the remains taken back home?" "Is there anything we can do to comfort you?" asked her friend. She answered, "No, there is something more vital, more real and more controlling in my love for my son, and what he was and did, and is, than any material relationship in all the world. Why, my dear boy is not buried, he lives in my very soul all the time. He is mine, and nothing material can bind him or take him from me." Some of you know something of her meaning, something of the vital hold which eternal things have upon us.

I look upon the portrait of my mother, and is it the portrait that thrills my heart, as beautiful as that may be? After returning from my summer outing, the first thing I longed to do, and did, was to get into my home and turn on the light and look at her portrait. I know not how, but somehow, deep in these souls of ours, there is something that death can never separate from us. It is undefined; it is unknown, but O, how vital and real it is! That is why God put this something we call "Faith" into the great casket of mystery. If we knew and understood and could reach up and measure the height and the depth, it would not be what it is. "The mysterious city lieth four-square." All the physical beauty of that city has been revealed in the marvellous pictures of Revelation—the golden streets,

the gates of pearl, the twelve kinds of precious stones, the crystal river! This symbolism is wonderful. The mystery has touched the infinite, and somehow, like John and Paul, we feel and "see through a glass darkly." "Now we know in part," but the "then" shall come, and when it comes we shall see "face to face." "We shall know even as we are known." "We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is."

The highest moral standard is there. Naught that defileth shall ever enter there; none whose hands are stained; none whose hearts are bereft of purity.

We may have the three—the physical, the mental and the moral, but we must have the *spiritual*.

What do we care primarily whether a man plays golf on Sunday or not? That is not the real question. Here is the question: Does he take the one day in seven for personal pleasure, the day which God gave to the soul to develop the *spiritual* side of life? Is he physically, mentally and morally all that he should be, but void of spiritual attainment? "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." It is not a cold command thrust down by God to enforce obedience from human beings. No! It is the loving and wise command to seize the opportunity for the human soul to develop the spiritual side of life, so that a child of God may be four-square. It is to protect life so that the enemy cannot get in on the hollow side left unprotected. Do you leave this out of your child's life? He is facing school, college, the world, with a physical, mental and moral development, but what if God is left out?

After all, the life we live here is very short. I talked with a man the other day, seventy-four years

old. He said, "My father lived to be ninety-eight, and I wish I might have the twenty-four more years, but I am now living on borrowed time." He seemed as well and strong as a man of fifty.

// I read the other day of a farm house with a sign outside—"Horse for Sale." A man went to ask about the horse, and a very old man came to the door, ninety-nine years old. He said, "I do not know much about that horse, but I will send out the boy to talk with you." He sent out his son who was eighty years of age. Well, it is a New England story. People live to old age and live well there."

A few years ago a member of this parish died in her one hundredth year. As I remember, she died on the fifteenth of December. If she had lived until the twenty-eighth she would have been one hundred. I went to her ninety-ninth birthday when she tried to blow out her birthday candles. "Well, even such old age is short-lived.

" But, our human souls are immortal." These three, four or five score years are very short, even as the grains of sand we pick up on the sea-shore are few in number to the sands on the shore.

What then about this fourth dimension? How about the spiritual life? To consider this truth this very church was built. The House of God exists to build up our lives and the lives of our children with a true sense and interpretation of God. The Lord Jesus Christ placed this mystery of heaven within our responsibility. "The City lieth four-square." Are we protecting our lives on the fourth side?

Christ came to be the Reconciler. He came to so

reveal and incarnate (embody) the actual mysteriousness of God that men might understand it. That is why "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." He is the One to give us the power of the interpretation of that fourth dimension which we term the spiritual.

That is the truth we long to convey this morning. What are we as God's people physically, mentally, morally and *spiritually*? What is this church doing to build us up in the soul's highest life? We are to reveal God to men through Jesus Christ His Son. This responsibility is yours and mine.

"A few years ago at a commencement at Yale, they were having a class reunion. The fifty-year men were back. It had been a record class in the number of men who had lived. They were sitting at the class reunion dinner, joking, as men out of college many years will joke, calling each other by old college nick-names again; when a white-bearded man, with snow-white hair, came in and stood before the table. Some of the men nudged each other, saying, "Bill, who is that?" or, "Jack, what's his name—was he in our class?" The man spoke and said, "Boys, you do not know me, do you?" They were ashamed of themselves, but some one spoke up and said, "No, we do not. Tell us." Hesitating, he said: "Wait a minute," and then going to the door he called to a lad outside—"Jack, come in here!" In walked a splendid young fellow, alert and strong, and stood before them. The father said, "Jack, smile," and instantly the crowd shouted, "It's Jerry! We all know you! Look at that smile; that body! Why, he is Jerry right over again."

The Almighty, the Eternal, the Unknown, Unrecog-

nised God is before the world to-day, and only Christ can reveal Him.¹¹ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might see and know eternal life, and through that Son of God, men will see the Father. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and this is the meaning of the fourth great dimension of life.

The curtain of life must be lifted that we may see Eternity and the Holy City which standeth four-square—physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. Then we will respond in our own souls, "Here am I for Thou hast made me worthy." And we shall "love the Lord our God with all our hearts, our souls, our minds and our strength and our neighbours as ourselves."

III

WINGS LIKE THE EAGLE

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”—ISAIAH 40:31.

God's word draws some of its most remarkable illustrations from the realm of natural life. The ocean, the mountains, the oak of the forest, the cedars of Lebanon, the cattle on a thousand hills, the fish, the sparrow, the lily, the blade of grass—nature holds first place in the word-picturing of the Bible.

The exactness of usage is also to be noted in this connection. When strength of physical force is to be illustrated, the writer seeks for lessons from the lion—the king of beasts—and so when renewed energy and lasting ambition are sought, we read of the eagle, the sole monarch of all the feathered tribe.

The eagle is sometimes used in Scripture to show the care of God for His children, as in the song of Moses, where He refers to His care over the children of Israel, He says: “As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young, He spread abroad His wings; He took them, He bore them on His pinions; so the Lord alone did lead Him, and there was no strange God with Him.” Picture, if you will, those wild crags of the region about Mount Sinai, with their

steeple-like pinnacles of rock; look in upon those deep fastnesses on the very top ledges; glance at that nest upon the shelf of that crevice; see the parent-birds as they hover far above, watching over the nest for safety. To the North, East, South and West all is one wild, unsheltered, mountain wilderness. Moses had ascended those peaks. Much of his earlier life had been spent in the companionship of nature. He knew the strength of the figure, for his inmost soul cried out, and thus it was that he used that which appealed to him with the most force.

Perhaps he had watched the eagle in her dealing with her young. Climbing up those crags he had been strangely fascinated, as all unexpectedly he had come near to that mountain home, and sheltered from view he had watched those parent-birds as they crowded their young from the nest, and gave them their first lessons in soaring. It had left a very vivid impression on his mind. It now comes back to him, as he tells in song of the goodness of God, the Great Parent, to the children of Israel.

The eagle is also pictured in God's Word as illustrating the sudden and dire attack of the enemies of Israel, coming upon them in punishment; swift, strong, without warning, fatal. His swiftness is also used to show the sudden loss of riches. His baldness to show the increasing calamities of the wicked. The height and seclusion of His dwelling to show the fancied security of the wicked. His hastening to the prey to reveal the swiftness of man's days. He was enumerated among the list of unclean birds in Israel. Attention is also called to his being the royal emblem of

the Roman armies. But it is not along these lines that we wish to consider this subject, but rather to learn from the natural characteristics of his life some of the lessons Scripture, together with the science of birds teach us.

Realising this, "so it shall be with us if we wait upon the Lord," as our text suggests. We read in Job, chapter thirty-nine, verses twenty-seven to thirty, "Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth on the rock and hath her lodging there, upon the crag of the rock and the stronghold. From thence she spieth out the prey; her eyes behold it afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is she."

A HOME ON THE ROCK

Together with our text, the first thought here is, "mounting upward." She ever aimeth upward as she starts to fly. Her highway is in the clouds. The avenue of her parade is in the clear upper air. She looks beneath her to see others; her own course ever lieth above. When she darts below, it is quickly to ascend again, and although she knows the earth, and lives from the earth, she spends her time above. Job goes on to say, "She makes her nest on high; she dwelleth on the rock and hath her lodging there, upon the crag of the rock and the stronghold."

Not satisfied with soaring herself, her home must be safe "on the rock." True, the beasts of the earth could quickly tear that nest to pieces and devour the young. True, the blasts of the forest can fell even the huge trees. But, look at that time-worn, weather-

beaten, torrent-washed rock! What has ever harmed it? There it stands like an eternal sentinel. Let the enemy come: they cannot ascend that cliff. Let the storm beat it: it cannot rend that storm-king. Let the rain fall: the mother-eagle is there upon the nest to cover the young, and the rock foundation knows no fear. The clear, breezy air will soon dry the nest, for it is high up on the rock. The nest is the home. A home on the rock. What a thought!

See that human life trying to make a home. What has been the trouble? Habit has torn the weavings of that nest. Sin has blown it asunder. Wild beasts have already reached out their awful terrors to frighten the young. The serpent has even hissed near them and shown his treacherous fangs. The parents have become discouraged and forlorn. Stop! Wretched one! Look yonder at the eagle's nest. It is on the rock. Where is your home built? Listen! The Saviour of men is speaking: "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock." "Oh! come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation."

Cry to God, with the eagle, not for yourself alone, but for your home. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." Yes, she "makes her nest on high, dwelleth on the rock, and hath her lodging there, upon the crag of the rock and the stronghold."

That rock-bound home, however, must be a place

of *training* as well as a safe abode. The eagle's life resembles man in the slow development of the young, as well as in its great age. Eagles have been known to live a century, according to our best naturalists. The maturity of their young is not attained until they are about three years of age; in fact, the true plumage does not appear until that time in most branches of the family.

THE EAGLE'S FIRST FLIGHT

But the parent-bird urges them to flight at the appropriate time. This is attempted in various ways. She crowds them from the nest. She places their food far enough from them so that the eaglet must reach out from the nest to get it. She gains their attention as she soars out toward the sun, each time going a little farther than before. She even pushes them off from the nest, so that they are forced to use their wings. The thought is not accurate that she urges them to fall from the nest and then quickly swoops under them. Without doubt, she frequently bears them on her wing; or, rather, on her shoulder or back, as they become tired. But, her aim is always to have them start to fly upward. "Like as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreads abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," is all true to nature, but "she spreadeth abroad her wings" that they may do the same; she takes them and bears them on her pinions when they fail or are weak.

Thus the home-nest is the place for training the child to do for himself. What if that mother-bird saw, after frequent urging, as the months went by, that

there was no desire on the part of the eaglet to do his part, then there would be need of force, for if that bird did not start it would soon waste away and die. Force may be needed to show the young thing the use of its wings.

" It is said that in the northern country of Asia one family of the great eagles is in the habit of going to a distant spot and plucking a mountain thorn, sharp and long, and, bringing it to the nest, she buries the same in the soft down and grass which lines its sides; some of that down, perchance, taken from her own breast to make that home comfortable and warm. Then, as the young birds, now needing the exercise of their wings and limbs, settle back in comfort, she crowds them on to the hidden thorn, and they are aroused.

May this thought not be used to comfort some of us as to the great Heavenly Father, as at times He may see us settling down amid life's comforts, instead of using our gifts for Him; and ought we to complain when we feel the prick which prompts us to service and life, which, perhaps, prompts us away from that soul-lethargy which means death? "

But, as I said, the bird urges the younger bird to fly upward. How many there are in this broad world who want their children to be all that they ought to be, as the world looks at life, who do not teach them to fly upward? They want the body to be right; the mind to be superior; the heart to be gentle and kind, but what of the soul? Are they teaching that younger life to fly upward?

A youth in one of our leading Eastern colleges was

about to graduate. A serious accident to a classmate had awakened a deep religious feeling throughout the class. This young man was approached by a friend as to giving his life to God and His service. He made reply: "Oh, no! I don't believe in that sort of thing. The last thing my father said to me on leaving home, four years ago, was not to get mixed up with any of their religious nonsense," and I guess I will stand by the governor." Had that father pushed the lad from the home-nest to fly upward? If the older bird has taught the eaglet to fly upward, there need be no fear as to the storm or foe, for once having learned the power of upward flight, that life will never be satisfied with the lower abiding-place, nor the lower air. The child is safe for time and eternity.

One thought of comfort to those who feel lonely and forlorn because the home-nest has been vacated: Think of the joy of soaring youth—that joy you have made possible. Your treasure is not lost because it has flown. Do you not remember the happiness when first you began to fly into new air of thought and knowledge? Of course, much that you did now seems old to you—the freshness of it is all gone—but that young life is in its first great joy of upward flight.

The great strength of the wing is alluded to in our text: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." Without its wings, the eagle would not be an eagle, as far as any of its possibilities are concerned. It might long to soar, but it could not. It might be upon the mountain-top, but if it fell without wings, it could never regain its position. It could not fight with the beasts of the wood, if it could not fly from their attack.

It would soon become battered by the very winds and storms in which it revels, had it not wings.

The power of the eagle's wing is marvellous. Naturalists tell us that it is equalled by few parallels in the world of life or mechanism. This bird, with wings measuring some seven feet from tip to tip, flies in the very teeth of the driving storm with perfect ease. Not satisfied with flying or sailing with the wind, she openly defies the storm. She looks down upon the black cloud beneath her lofty eyrie, and then, after an upward flight, sinks into its very blackness to rise in battlings against it. Yonder the mountain-ash gives way under the terrific blasts of the storm; but, the eagle, with her wild cry, sweeps into the very face of the storm in open combat.

THE SWEEPING WINGS

Think of the *speed* of those wings as well. Is it strange that Moses was told to cry out to the Israelites that if they were disobedient "their enemies should come down upon them swift as an eagle's flight"? Job tells us in the verses already quoted that "from the crag she seeketh her prey, and her eyes behold afar off."

The method of obtaining food, often resorted to by the bald, or white-headed, eagle of our country, well illustrates this speed.

Perched high upon some distant point, upon the highest naked tree of the crag, this bird views the landscape all about, until it sees the osprey about to dart for the fish in the stream below. Keenly he watches, and as the successful fisherman, with triumph-

ant cry, rises from the water with its victim firmly held, the eagle swiftly follows, and, free from all incumbrance, soon reaches the victor with its prize. Circling about it with threatening attitude, the smaller bird in fear drops the fish, whereupon the eagle, with careful, swift aim, descends and captures the fish before it reaches the earth or stream.

Its speed has frequent illustration likewise in its bold attack when driven by hunger and want. The golden eagle has been the most known in this capacity. It has been seen to snatch the hare from almost the very jaws of the pursuing pack of dogs. It has snatched infants from their mothers who left them only for a moment and had removed but a few feet away. It has stolen the lamb from the very side of the shepherd, armed as he was with his strong staff, but ere he could wield a blow, its strong wings had carried eagle and lamb beyond his reach. Again, with Job, we repeat as he speaks of the years, "they fly as swift as ships, as eagles that hasten to the prey."

Again our text says: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their *strength*; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." This strength shall be ours—tireless, constant. Is it not true then that God's strength is made perfect in weakness? No figure of natural strength could mean more to us than the eagle's wing. With such shall we mount upward, if we wait on Him.

SOLITUDE

Again, the eagle is above all birds—the one which dwells in solitude. He dwells afar from man and beast. He flies often into the wilderness. John writes

in Revelation: "And there were given to the woman the two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place." The wilderness is her place. She knows what it is to be solitary. How many of us there are who are afraid to be alone! We cry, "society!" Yes, and the world would be a strange place if we had not social lives, but God pity the man who is afraid to face the realities of his life *alone* at times. The social fever of our day is due largely to a natural environment, and it is all right. We would not have it otherwise; but, do not let your life with others rob you of solitary thought. Sometimes our continuance of sociability acts as a sort of stimulant to a sin-sick body, and life, and a time of solitude would reveal the true life as it is and give the possibility of one's coming to himself. Solomon tells us that "the way of the eagle is the air." That way is a solitary way.

IN THE HEART OF THE SUN

"The most marvellous faculty of the eagle we have not yet touched. We refer to her *vision*. Alone among birds, she can look without fear into the very fiercest brightness of the sun. She takes great voyages out toward the sun, with her eyes fixed thereon. Instead of seeming to deaden her vision, it seems to quicken it. She sees her prey from afar. She watches her young from the highest heavens. Her vision surpasses the understanding and analysis of the oculist. God framed that wonderful eye; man never could. That eye is not annoyed by the flash of the vivid lightning; not if the flash is at her side. The upward glance of the eagle

to the sun is said to arouse all her inward power, and awaken her physical activity. This glance is the secret of that very renewing life which so ennobles the bird. Weariness and faintness, the very thoughts of our text, are dispelled by that glance at the meridian sun.

Rev. John MacNeal tells us in one of his sermons of an eaglet which was captured by an old Scotch hunter in the highlands of his home land. The man brought it home to his child for a pet. Having nothing for a cage, but an old house, latticed years before for hens and chickens, he made this the home of the young eagle. Months passed and the boy and the eagle grew fond of each other. Months grew into years. The bird had become large and full-grown, but seemed perfectly contented with its narrow home and daily food. One day the boy let the eagle out into the yard. He seemed afraid to stretch his legs. He seemed alarmed as he tried to spread his great, broad wings. At last they placed him on the stone wall of the garden. With an effort he descended to the ground. The sun was rising higher and higher, for the day was young as yet. In time the eagle walked back into his accustomed pen, apparently perfectly satisfied. The next day when the sun was high in the heavens, the boy opened the pen again, and after urging the eagle out, placed him on the wall as he looked into the face of the great sun. It seemed bewildered for a moment. Then, with almost frightened enthusiasm, it stretched forth its great wings, and in a moment more, with its eyes still gazing on the sun, it mounted upward. On and on it went. The lad, helpless and overcome, cried in vain for his return. He watched the bird, until, a tiny

speck between him and the sun, it disappeared altogether. The eagle was gone forever. It had gazed into the heart of the sun. No longer the pen for its home. It evermore would dwell on the mountain-tops.

Where is your life? Are you bounding your talents and gifts (God-given gifts) by man's surrounding? Look at Jesus Christ, the Son of Righteousness. Look into His heart of burning love. Listen: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Mount on those wings with your eye fixed on Him. Soar! Soar higher! Mount up with wings like eagles! "For I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." //

IV

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.”—REVELATION 21:1.

There are five great truths in this text:

- FIRST: We find the thought of vision—“*I saw a new heaven and a new earth.*”
- SECOND: The thought of novelty—“*I saw a new heaven and a new earth.*”
- THIRD: The thought of sequence or order—*First* he saw a new *heaven*, and *then* he saw a new *earth*.
- FOURTH: The thought of destruction—The first heaven and the first earth *were no more*.
- FIFTH: The thought of the end of mystery—“*There was no more sea.*”

Briefly this morning, let us consider these five truths as related to the great truth of the resurrection.

First: “*I saw a new heaven.*” The soul is dead that knows not vision. You say some people have imagination and some have not. It is true that the imagination is somewhat a matter of degree. That is why in our schools and kindergartens to-day we are seeking to develop the imaginative in the child's nature. There

was a time when imagination was left to later days and was not developed in our early school system. We can remember the days of the first, second and third readers, when the thought was commitment. The student must memorize. We can remember when our scholarship depended upon our ability to commit to memory. Some of us have never been blessed by remarkable memories, and perhaps are glad that times have changed and are emphasising the development of initiative, thus giving the imagination a chance.

This great nation is more a nation of inventive genius than any other nation in the world. Every day there are new developments. If you had been told twenty-five years ago that you could pick up a telephone instrument and telephone by wireless, nobody would have believed you were sane, and still the things which are actually happening to-day in the experience of the hour are largely the result of a great inventive genius, which has always been related largely to the Anglo-Saxon race, although experienced by others.

It is just so in the spiritual realm. This is the reason that some one invents a new religion every day, because the inventive genius goes out into thought and mentality, as well as the adaptableness of the use of the hands. Here it may have harmful influence. There is a great danger because it may take us from the moorings of the soul; nevertheless, this spirit of seeking the new is a part of the great plan of God.

A man without a vision is a man without a soul; his soul becomes stolid and petrified. We want to see the things beyond us; we love to close our eyes and behold, when the singing of a great hymn fills the

Church of God, for the imagination has memories! We see scenes which we have never seen before. There is something we call a thrill that goes up the very spine, and a man feels a keen emotion of soul. It is the vision of the soul—the seeing into the past or into the beyond. There is a great craving to-day in the hearts of men to know the unseen world, or a longing of the soul to see those in the other world whom human eyes cannot see. And, unless we exercise great care, we will be drawn away into vague mysteries which are not hallowed, seeking to know the things which God has withheld from those who trust Him.

We must be exceedingly careful that the vision of the soul does not go so far that we become visionary. We need the vision of the soul! The mystical has its place. What a wonderful hymn this is:

“Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine;
The veil of sense hangs dark
Between Thy blessed face and mine.

“I see Thee not; I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me;
And earth hath ne’er so dear a spot
As where I meet with Thee.

“Like some bright dream that comes unsought,
When slumbers o’er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought,
And charms my ravished soul.”

There is something in such vision of the soul which is most inspiring. We may not be mystics, but we need something of this vision of the unseen.

When the little child closes her eyes at night as you turn out the light, you hear a little voice say:

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

Why was that little prayer the most popular prayer in the trenches? Some of those dear fellows did not realise what it was to pray, but “Now I lay me” was their prayer because it was associated with the endearments of the home and the loving touch of their childhood. The vision returned.

This is the vision of the soul we must see. Sometimes parents thoughtlessly say to little children in the dark—“You will see things”—“The goblins will get you if you don’t watch out!” This is all wrong, for a child ought to have associated with the hours of darkness that which is inspiring and helpful that the child may gain that vision of the soul—“Now I lay me down to sleep; I pray the Lord my soul to keep.” The Scripture says the angels of God watch over the little ones.

Second: The Thought of Novelty. “I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth.” We need more than vision. He saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth. We use the word “novelty” as related to some plaything for a child. We find in all the department stores a section or department of “novelties.” A novelty is something out of the ordinary. But the word novelty has here the thought of newness—a beginning, a new life, a new opportunity. The vision of the soul shows that which is new and which is priceless, because it has the beginning in it, the new chance. “Every day is a new beginning.” Every day begins a new effort. “A *new*

heaven and a *new* earth," and that newness means something we have not seen and found. Why God has greater things prepared for the believer than we have ever dreamed of!

I had a dear friend who died many years ago. She said that always when she returned home from college she expected something new in her room in their home—sometimes a piano, or a new desk, or a new chair—something new, and she always anticipated it. As she was dying, she said: "Do you suppose my earthly father is better than my heavenly Father will be? I am dying, but 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' I believe that the One who went to prepare a place for me has a *new* room; has something more beautiful than I have ever dreamed of for me."

Third: Now notice the sequence, our third thought. Notice the order—"A new *heaven* and a new *earth*." Human beings put day before night. God always puts night before day. In the creation period you will find that the Scripture says: "And the evening and the morning were the first day," not the morning and the evening—that is the way *we* begin. That is where the Cotter's "Saturday Night" started; the night of preparation, then the day of blessing. A natural sequence.

The day goes wrong with many of us because the night is not started aright, and we do not live the night aright. How can you expect young men in modern social life to become successful in business when that social life, in many instances, compels them to stay up until two or three o'clock in the morning, entertain-

ing? The reform of society must begin with the night and not with the day.

"I saw a new *heaven* and a new *earth*." We can never have a "new earth" until we have a "new heaven." The new heaven must precede. Christ said heaven begins here. There is no heaven *there* that has not begun *here*. You must see a new heaven *before* you can have a new earth. This is the trouble with reform. We think we can reform this world into righteousness. It can never be done, because sin means death. This resurrection truth is life. It is the raising from the dead. The night, the new heaven, must precede the new earth. But, you say, you cannot see the heaven! Neither can you see the night, but out of the night dawns the great morn.

Have you seen the sun rise in the distant East? Have you looked over the great lake and seen the sun rise as it comes up from the water? The grey light of dawn as it reveals something coming out of the darkness of the night, and then gradually the great orb bursts out on the horizon, blending the red, the salmon, the gold of the king of day, as he shows himself! The day has come, but it came out of the night.

God wants us to have a new heaven in our hearts. We must go back to the original pattern. Christ said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." The new earth must come as a result of the new heaven. We must have a new vision of heaven. Heaven must be within before it can be without. A new earth follows this new heaven.

Fourth: Now notice, "I saw a new heaven and a

new earth, but *the old heaven and the old earth were passed away.*"

When we come to destruction, we all feel as if we were iconoclasts, and say, no, keep the old things and let them remain in our hearts and lives. Have we ever realised this: that a continual holding to ourselves and keeping that which is dear to us and the past may rob us of the future? We can have such a clinging to our possessions that we destroy the possibilities and possessions of the future.

You look into the face of your little child and say, "I wish my child could always be young." How lovely it is to see a little child rejoicing and glorying in this Easter Season! So happy over the Easter eggs that were placed at her plate at the breakfast table! Oh, that we could always keep them as little children!" But no, they must grow and develop. What sadder sight than to see a child failing to grow and mature as the years pass! The joys of childhood deepen into the greater joys of full and complete life. We must "put away childish things." "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

If we cling continually to the old and to all the traditions and associations of it, we will simply destroy the new, for the old must pass away to make place for the new.

I read from one of our great Englishmen this last week, an essay in which he said to the youth of Eng-

land, "Young men, live in all the thrill of your outdoor competition; let the spirit of the cricket field mean all to you that it may and has to the youth of England, but remember you are facing a life service where there will be need of all you can gain on that athletic field of determination, strength and reliance! and remember that 'life is real and life is earnest,' " quoting those wonderful words of our own Longfellow:

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal.
Dust thou art, to dust returneth
Was not spoken of the soul.

"Lives of great men all remind us.
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

The new heaven must be in the soul if the new earth is to come among men. Jesus Christ represented that new heaven when He said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is in your midst."

Fifth and lastly: Mystery ends when vision becomes sight. "And there was *no more sea*."

The great ocean means mystery. Napoleon standing on the deck of the vessel during his last sea voyage said, "No man is great. This is vastness." Oh, that he had learned the lesson earlier.

The sea tells the story of mystery and majesty. Its vastness includes its very mystery. Hundreds of thousands of unknown dead it might give up. Its far-reaching shores lap the untrodden Arctic and Antarctic. Its bosom receives the waters of myriad rivers whose mouths are seldom seen by man. Its unfathomed

depths contain life unknown to biologist or student. Its streams and currents still mystify the mariner and necessitate new maps and charts. But, in the day of the new heaven and the new earth there shall be no more sea. "Now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known." "Now abideth faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." "And God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Yes, in the day of that new heaven and new earth mystery will be gone, even as the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre. The Lord of light had arisen from the dead. This was not even as it was at the grave of Lazarus, for here the stone *must be* rolled away to let him forth, but the Saviour *was* gone. The tomb had lost its victory, for He had risen.

All is new. There is no more sea. There is no longer the mystery, for faith hath become sight. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." In that new heaven and new earth there dwelleth righteousness.

This is the vision and message of the Easter Day.

V

BALAAM AND GOD'S WILL

"And Balaam the son of Beor they slew with the sword."—NUMBERS 31:8.

Was the death of Balaam such an important bit of history? Why single him out with the five kings of Midian? Who was this heathen prophet, and why was he so cruelly slain? Are not his prophecies among the most marvellous and accurate in history? Did not God Himself talk with this man face to face? Did not Balaam bless Israel, God's chosen people, with fearless utterance before Balak their enemy? Let us recall the whole story:—

The children of Israel had spent nearly forty years wandering in the wilderness. They had reached the borders of the Promised Land. The powerful Amorites alone stood before them and the Jordan. Permission to advance was refused by Sihon, the strong, progressive king. Israel fought, and Sihon and his hosts were slain. Northward they march. Og, the giant king of Bashan, also is conquered; and victorious Israel, under the matchless Moses, encamps in the fertile valleys of Moab, just east of Jericho. Balak, the king of Moab, now fears for his people. If Sihon and Og could avail nothing, military strength and genius are insufficient. Divine aid must be sought. He

consults with the wise men of Midian, an adjacent country on the east.

Four hundred miles away, at Pethor, over the mountains, on the great river Euphrates, lives a mighty soothsayer and magician. His fame is universal. Rumor has it that even the Egyptian king once sent to consult him. The people whom he blesses are blessed, those whom he curses are cursed.

The elders from Balak, laden with the "rewards of divination," appear at the home of the prophet. Their message is simple. "A great people has journeyed to our land from Egypt. They are mighty warriors; the natives of the desert have been overcome; the powerful Amorites have been annihilated. They eat up our land 'as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.' Balaam, thou gifted one of the most high God, behold these countless gifts from Balak our king. 'Come now, therefore, we pray thee, and curse this people, for they are too mighty for us: that we may smite them and drive them out of the land.' "

The prophet consults God, as the elders lodge with him. He refuses to go for God says: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed."

Returning from their king a second time with princes more honourable and rewards even greater, again they plead with him to accompany them. King Balak "will promote thee unto every great honour," and "will do whatsoever thou sayest unto him." Again they tarry as Balaam consults God. Consent is given to his wish. He goes with them. "God's anger" is "kindled." The "angel of the Lord" blocks the way. His faithful beast

reproves him for his cruel madness. His eyes are opened. The sword of an injured God flashes before him, and the Divine voice speaks, "Thy way is perverse before me."

The prophet is met by Balak on the very border of his kingdom, and oxen and sheep are offered in sacrifices. The following day they climb the heights of Baal and look off upon Israel. At Balaam's command, seven altars are built, and seven oxen and rams slain. As Balak stands by the offering, Balaam sees God. He returns, and, instead of cursing, blesses. "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? . . . Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Bewildered, Balak leads him to Mount Pisgah; again the altars and sacrifices, and Balaam's meeting with God alone. A second time he stands among the princes of Moab, and says: "Behold I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. God brought them out of Egypt. . . . They have the strength of the wild bull. . . . They shall rise up as a great lion . . . and drink the blood of the slain."

Irritated, the persistent king leads the prophet to a third eminence, the top of lofty Peor. Yet again, the sacrifices, and again Balaam, looking off over the myriad tents of Israel, speaks as the Spirit of God comes upon him: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" (Do you see the face of Balak as it darkens and wrinkles under the prophet's words?) "He shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. . . . Blessed is he that bless-

eth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee!" Angered now, Balak turns upon the prophet, and, withholding the promotion to honour, bids him flee. Ere he leaves, Balaam recalls to the mind of Balak the words he had primarily spoken, declaring that he could not go beyond the words of God, even if Balak should give him "his house full of silver and gold." Then he adds that far-reaching and remarkable prophecy of western advance, culminating in the "Star out of Jacob."

But Balaam did not go back to the banks of the Euphrates. Sojourning in Midian, he accomplished through the subtlety of idolatry and sin the curse which he dared not pronounce with his lips. He taught the daughters of Midian to entice the sons of Israel in the false and immoral worship of Baal-Peor.

The curse fell. The tents of Jacob on the banks of the Jordan became infested with all the horrors of the plague. Twenty-four thousand died. The swift and awful javelin of chaste Phinehas appeased God, and stayed the curse; but God's just vengeance followed the Midianites. A thousand chosen men from every tribe, with Phinehas the warrior-priest, were sent forth, and slew the idolaters. Five kings of Midian fell, and "Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword," for as Moses tells us later, "these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord."

Balaam was a strange mixture of good and evil. His life is a study worth our while. One moment we are won by his apparent reverence and fidelity, and the next we are repelled by his detestable subtlety and avarice.

Human life is duplex in its nature, but every man has a controlling character. He is either self-willed, or self is lovingly lost in the will of another. Man is either selfish or unselfish. Life is either right or wrong. The history of Balaam is sufficient to place him without a doubt beside Cain, Haman, Simon the sorcerer, and Judas. He was a bad man as far as we have a right to judge. Why, then, study his character? Why not sigh and turn the page? Why? Because this Balaam is a great type of what is too often called Christian life.

First: He was *controlled* by *avarice*, "he loved the wages of unrighteousness." The rewards of divination in the hands of these elders of Midian, fanned the flame that consumed his life. He was a professional religionist, blessing and cursing for money. He made holy things a commodity of trade. He sold the things of God. He cared more for the "rewards of divination" than for Divinity.

The journeying elders were of little consequence to him; Moab and Midian were at best but defeated tribes, driven back previously by Sihon the slain Amorite. But the messengers had rewards. "The love of money" was his "root of all evil." Before they spoke, the intelligent and gifted prophet must have anticipated their errand. Had not the victories of these former Goshenites reached his ears? Rumour must certainly have informed him of their power. If even the powerful Amorites could not conquer them; if Sihon and Og had failed, why should Balak or the Midianites hope to arrest their course? Did he not know that the God of Israel, who walled up the Red Sea, and swal-

lowed Pharaoh's mighty host, was the Almighty and the Eternal One? As they deliver their message, why does he hesitate? "Curse Israel?" Curse the children of the Almighty? His own firm manner should have silenced and chagrined them. No obligation to the western tribes bound him. He had nothing to gain from their favour. His fearless, frank testimony as to Israel would have established the hopelessness of their request. . . . But the prophet of the Euphrates is two-faced. With one face he looks at God, with the other he sees *gold*. He will "talk with God," and explain matters to God. Perhaps God will let him go. What folly! Here we see the grasping coward pretend to consecrate sinful desire under the name of religion, and having dallied with temptation, seek to excuse himself. Should he not be hospitable to these guests? Ought he not to consider this invitation thoughtfully? Having yielded, subtle reason tempts him further. Perhaps a deceiver has scattered these rumours as to Israel; exaggeration may have enlarged the truth. All this with one face toward God, while that other inner face watched the "rewards of divination." If temptation once gains a foothold, immediately it works to establish itself. So now he reasons still further with himself: "Why should I not receive these rewards if I can possibly arrange to get them without openly opposing God's will? Balak will see that my desire is to please him, even if I am limited."

Now *avarice* is doing its most deadly work. It is transforming the will, the desire. The power of prophecy, of divination, has become simply a means to an end, that end being the *gain* which the *man himself*

craves. Balaam's desire was not to do God's will, but to *appear* to do God's will that he might get the world's reward and favour. As he journeys, God's rebuke from his faithful beast, so cruelly treated, does not turn him back. The love of gold is an ever-increasing love which transforms freedom into slavery. It chains the soul, and saddest of all, it deafens the ears and blinds the eyes, so that its victim neither sees the links nor hears the clanking of the chains that bind him. God seemed to free Balaam. He would not let him curse Israel; He shielded him. But, alas, the man was deceived. The tempter controlled: and, although he would not defy God openly, although he even gloried outwardly in His blessing, he gained his secret craving for worldly reward through cunning deception and sinful intrigue.

As prophet and king looked down from those mountain peaks of Moab,

"In outline dim and vast,
Their fearful shadows cast
The giant forms of empires on their way
To ruin: one by one
They tow'r and they are gone.
Yet in the prophet's soul the dreams of avarice
stay."

Second: Balaam trifled with truth. Appearing and professing to reverence holy things, he simply used them for his own ends. To do this, he assumed to be genuine. He was not sincere; he used truth to falsify his position; he was the "wolf in sheep's clothing," the prophet's garb covering a life of sinful desire. His holy utterances were mechanical and professional. His face bore the seraphic smile of light; his heart dwelt

in darkness. Truth fled from him as he yielded to the tempter, and he was forced to draw over his guilt a false covering. Having substituted the form for the reality, he did not hesitate to take in vain God's name and message. His soul had ceased to struggle with temptation, and even prayer and conversation with God was simply an effort to persuade God to his will.

We read in Deuteronomy and Joshua that "God would not hearken unto Balaam." He had *trifled with truth*, and now he was *trifling with the God of truth*. The truth-trifler soon learns to care more for the approval of man than for the peace of God. Not what God saw, but what man witnessed, was of interest to him. Truth he would speak, even accurately and fearlessly, but his prophetic office and power demanded this, and protected him from bodily harm. This verified the genuineness of his character outwardly, and seemed to his clouded vision to appease the wrath of his God for the falsity of his motive. In another way he would silently and cunningly accomplish his end, the wink of understanding with Balak would insure the reward. Truth enthroned in his presence was really "on the scaffold," and, if the "Great Avenger" seemed careless, our text shows that He stood "within the shadow," for "they slew Balaam, the son of Beor, with the sword." Why did he build those altars? Why did he sacrifice the oxen and sheep? Why did he depart to talk with the Almighty? Did he not know God's will? Was it not that he was seeking to compromise with God, that through his outward devotion to the formal he might gain his point? As the smoke rose from his altars of sacrifice, would not God accept it as an odour

of a sweet smell, and thus translate truth to please the prophet?

Micah answers (referring to Balaam) : "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? . . . Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams? . . . Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? . . ." Shall I under the false light of a formal sacrifice think to transform wrong into right; to change error into truth? No, thou trifler. Thy sacrifices shall not avail; thy life is false. Thy religion suggests a whited sepulchre. Thou canst not, as says Stanley, "over-power the voice of conscience with the forms of sacrifice." . . . "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Third: Balaam substituted *knowledge for love*. He knew God, but he did not love God. He talked with God, but in that conversation the lips spoke, and the ears heard, but the heart was silent. He met God with eye and mind, but the heart did not respond. He did not really see God for he was not "pure in heart."

Balaam's knowledge was his power. His fame was the child of his wisdom. The mystical on his lips was the offspring of his larger vision. His shrewd insight and farsightedness resulted from rare personal gifts and a trained and thoughtful mind. Able scholarship added to his influence, while his religious professions commanded reverence.

To know has always seemed to be religion to the

ignorant and superstitious, but knowledge without love lives but to die. This man knew, but his knowledge did not save him when the sword of the truth-loving Phinehas swept Midian. Knowledge itself cannot save. "Ye shall know the truth, and the *truth* shall make you free," not the knowledge of the truth. God is Truth. Christ said, "I am the *Life*, the *Truth* and the *Way*." "In Him" (the Truth) "was the love of God perfected."

Cain knew God and talked with Him. Judas was one of those who spent months of time with Jesus Christ. But neither Cain nor Judas loved. Balaam knew God, but Balaam failed to love God. He loved not knowledge; he loved not divination, but he loved their *rewards*. Self-love ruled and walked hand in hand with knowledge. Thus unfolds another lesson. Knowledge without love enshrines reason and banishes faith. The unseen gives way before the seen. The unknown then mothers unbelief. No life of faith could have spoken those holy words of prophecy, and still failed to believe in the loving care and fatherhood of God, as seen in His care for Israel. Knowledge had reasoned away faith, because love was not there. Love only can bid knowledge clasp hands with faith, for "love believeth all things . . . love never faileth," but "prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away." How Balaam's knowledge vanished and was quickly forgotten! Popular reference to-day scarcely mentions him aside from his faithful dumb beast, which was not dumb. His knowledge did not save him when Israel was avenged for Midian's

sin. Knowledge void of love has never saved man. It never can.

To *know* what is right, is not *to do* what is right. Simply to know God is not enough, for this man talked with Him face to face. And yet, the religion of knowledge, with its creed of rationalism, is dangerously near the civilisation of the day in which we live. But, remember Balaam's error, and "though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, . . . though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and *all knowledge*, . . . and have not *love* . . . *we are nothing.*"

Fourth: Balaam's saddest error was that he *deceived his own soul*. He tried to think he was favoured of God. He reasoned that God's temporary presence insured His eternal presence. He had so long trusted in his forms of worship, that they had become his worship. He worshipped the image, and thought the image was God. He is the father of formalism and externalism, for they both grow from a self-deceived conception of pure religion.

It is the sad picture of the Pharisee, thanking God that he is "not as other men are, or even as this publican." He, too, seeks a reward, as he makes long prayers on the street corners, and "verily," says Christ, "he has his reward." The awful punishment of hypocrisy is *hypocrisy*. The hypocrite grows to be self-deceived.

But was Balaam a hypocrite? Was he not a moral man? Did he not live up to a high standard of ethics? Was he not a follower of God's own voice? Was he not strict in obedience? Did he not fearlessly speak

the words of God, even when that brought the disfavor of the king? Was he not gifted, and honourable and trustworthy? Yes, and this is where he was self-deceived. *Outwardly* he was God's; *inwardly* he belonged absolutely to self. He convinced himself that duty lay in the path he chose, rather than in God's path. He led duty, duty did not lead him. (I wonder how many of us are like him in this single particular.) His prayer was a seeking to convince God of the possible error of right, and so gain Divine permission to call wrong right. His desire was *not to do God's will*, but to keep on safe terms with Him. His own will, although clothed in religion, and acting in righteous deeds, was his uncontrolled absolute monarch. His will ruled in life; that will fell in death, but fell in a self-deceived soul.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear." Are we self-deceived? "No," we reply, "I know my Lord. I pray regularly and fervently, doing good as I have opportunity. I live a respectable, merciful, upright life." Listen, Christ is speaking—not threateningly, but in that calm voice of authority and truth—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . . Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." "Iniquity? Wherein have we sinned? We are members of Thy church; we have been trained in Christian homes; we are respectable citizens in a God-fearing land. Wherein have we

done iniquity?" Let Balaam reply. God slew him because *he did his own will instead of God's will*, and even in so doing, deceived his own soul, convincing himself that he did the will of God. Complete that thought of Christ, already quoted—"Not he that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father."

VI

UNITING WITH THE CHURCH

A PLEA FOR REVIVAL

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.”—PSALM 107:2.

Our subject is Confessing Christ or Membership in His Church. Naturally, we think of those who are holding back, who are generally spoken of as “without the fold.” We would change this method to-day, and realising what God has done, present with His power the *joy and blessing* of confession, and its relation to a revival of His Spirit.

Church membership is not a condition of salvation, but confessing Christ is, for the true believer must confess. The Master Himself said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.” Paul also added in his Roman letter, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

There is a difference between confessing Christ and uniting with the Church, but not a distinction in the every-day usage of the terms. Many believers, no

doubt, are not in the visible Church, just as many in the Church are evidently unbelievers. We read "Judge not," but we also read "By their fruits ye shall know them." This inconsistency is the excuse of many who do not profess. If sincere, it is due to a misunderstanding of the meaning and place of the Lord's Supper! As we do not come to the Table upon any merit of our own, neither have we the right to stay away through the lack of merit of others. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come." There is nothing said as to our lives or the lives of others, for the only life we then honor is His life, and that the life through His death. Argument will not lead men to open confession of Christ. Force fails as it inevitably does with matters of the heart. Appeal usually proves vain because of unwillingness.

The question primarily depends upon the thought of redemption, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." If you are redeemed, speak out, say so. A self-satisfied life, self-justifiable, complacent, heeds not, nor have we the right to expect. The Master is patient, but He does not spend time with the soul when in that state. He is the Saviour, the Great Physician, seeking the suffering, the needy, the lost. The unheeding who really need Him most of all, He loves, but He will not force an entrance into their hearts. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear and open I will come in." But the door must be opened to the Saviour. Sin must be confessed, "For all have sinned." "There is none righteous, no not one." The voice must be that of the suppliant, "God be merciful to *me, a sinner.*"

Then the reasonable, loving Redeemer replies, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name, thou art mine." The redeemed one, our text affirms, should speak out his redemption, "let the redeemed of the Lord say so." (Our thoughts should quicken all of us who now confess Him to awake out of sleep and realise that every day and every moment are times of emergency and responsibility. Times to "let our lips and lives express the Holy Gospel we profess.")

If then you love Jesus Christ; if you believe Him to be your Saviour; if you have quietly accepted the standard of His life and seek to live that life in His Divine strength, believing that He has redeemed you on the cross, *why not say so?* The joy, the comfort, the blessing of this open, frank, inspiring testimony will interpret life anew to you, and perhaps through you to others.

The Word of God is filled with illustration and experience of the joy and continued blessing of open and willing confession of religious faith. History records the fact all along that moral strength, noble character, and righteous leadership have been strong in those of avowed religious confession and belief. Perhaps in our desire to win the world, we have erred in urging this step too zealously, instead of telling His wonderful Gospel and waiting for His Spirit to prompt the open act of confession.

Confessing Christ will give you the joy of freedom from the power of sin. Your very weakness will show His power. You will also cease viewing the sins of

the Church, for your eyes will no longer seek the sins of others that you may justify self by comparison.

The avowal of our own sinful nature saved by Christ's sacrifice fixes our vision upon Him rather than upon the inconsistencies of others. Then it is that we put ourselves in the attitude to others to see many of the good qualities we otherwise would overlook. Consciousness of neglected duty subtly makes us detectives, ever on the spy for the failings of others. See before you every day a Redeemer, pure, ideal, and then in God's open fields among the flowers of sunlight and the ferns of shade, you will not look for briars and thistles. Openly His, you will become an appreciator of good instead of a critic of error.

The great good things of His Church will begin to appeal to you. History will point out the godly patriarchs, and the holy fathers following on after the chosen twelve whom He so loved. The martyr's cross and stake will be o'er topped with a halo instead of underlit with the wicked torch. The Bible will become your daily food, the much-sought food of the soul, instead of a book from which to search out all possible human difficulty. The service of God's house will be reverential and worshipful because the heart is right with Him. It will no longer be a place which you attend, but a joyful devotion of which you are a part. The hymns will be the expression of your heart in devout praise; the scripture lesson nourishment for your inner life, that which the quiet hours of the Sabbath will afford time to meditate and assimilate. The prayer will be the voice of the human soul lifted to God in heartfelt adoration and praise, and the petition will

have a living faith that gives assurance. Why this change? Have you not habitually attended Church? Yes, but now you do not attend, you *constitute* the Church. The Church is not the building, but the people. You are no longer within the Church. You *are* the Church, and Jesus Christ is yours. Can you conceive of a bride happy and content who is ashamed to be known as the wife of her husband? Will a bride, even if she is not ashamed of that bridegroom, separate herself from him in the presence of others habitually? The Church is the Bride of Christ.

The Joy of Opportunity will also be yours. Everywhere you will be pointed out as a Christian. You will be expected to do other than the worlding, and your conduct will command respect and appreciation even if temporarily there may sometimes be embarrassment. In times of characterless wavering you will be strong, and your courage will be the stay of many a weaker life. When others fall, you will be expected to take their part to lead them to sure ground. When the world is cross and scolds, and calls sorrow hard-luck, and accident cruelty, your face will bear a smile of confidence and peace, and your conversation will have no bitter word nor hasty judgment. As a living letter, read and known of all men, you will call forth answers which will lead to correspondence without limit.

What wonderful opportunity to plead personally and testify for the Master! What an opportunity will also be yours in God's house with eye ever open, and ear ever alert for those who need Christ and have not found Him. Interested and aroused there, you, as a member of the Church, as one of Christ's ambassadors, can seek

out that one and point Him to the Saviour, and direct him to the minister through your personal introduction. The opportunity afforded in the life of every day is largely increased by the public confession of Christ. You are not only known as a business man, a professional man, but as a Christian business or professional man. The two do not become identical in the natural classification of men. If you live consistently you will be the center of interest among men who do not love Christ, as one who loves and honours Him, and your influence will be larger than you yourself will realise. The opportunity of association with Christian institutions will increase, each multiplying usefulness, none more influential than those directly connected with the Church appointments. The Christian business man in the prayer meeting, or in the Sunday School can do an immense amount for the development of the youth of the Church.

With this joy of opportunity will be the *joy of responsibility*, and who is the man who will not glory in increased responsibility. The responsibility will be felt more in the home than anywhere else, and here it should be felt. The father or mother who is an open confessor of Christ at home is seldom outside the membership of the Church, nor should he be. "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things Christ hath done for thee," was His command. Andrew, after hearing Jesus speak, first found his own brother Simon and confessed "We have found the Messias." Peter the Rock! Peter the mighty preacher was the result.

How slight seems the daily opportunity of honoring

Christ in the home, but this may mean the conversion and marvellous power of one in that home. Thoughtlessly a father says, "My children do not stop to think whether I am a member of the Church or not." We will wave the argument, but we reply the inspirational word, "What an opportunity you have and what a grand responsibility of compelling the admiration of those very children by a life of consistent, joyful, Christian fidelity." In a few short years they will no longer be little children, and as they begin to find their duties, their pleasures, their companions outside of the home, your moulding influence will then be gone.

This joy of responsibility is also the teacher's privilege. Many of our greatest and best men have testified that the character and training of a Christian teacher gave them life's real meaning and religious purpose. There is not a vocation or service in the world in which the joy of responsibility may not be felt if the *redeemed of the Lord would only say so*.

The blessing of such utterance for Him can never be known on earth. Jesus Christ confessed publicly may call forth the criticism and cynicism of a few, but these expressions count for little and are soon forgotten. Generally they bespeak the self-excusing life, or the life of worldly or social aspiration. The deep heart of man rejoices in the courage and conviction of the believer. An infidel sat in the rear of a great church as a large body of men and women were taken into the church, many of them being baptised. Not a word he uttered, but after the solemnity of the service, as the throng passed out into the street, he said sadly

to a friend: "Would to God I had been there, for such scenes make me think there is a God."

The ever present blessing of a clear conscience accompanies such confession. We fall, we sin, we err, but we are *redeemed*, and that means forgiven, and we are His, not our own. "We are bought with a price." That price is paid. "Who in His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." We are "dead to sin that we may live unto righteousness."

Will you not deliberately, calmly, and seriously ask yourself these questions: "Why have I not united with the Church of Christ?" "Why have I not openly confessed Jesus Christ as my Saviour?" Will you not pray that God's Holy Spirit may to-day make you willing to do this thing?

But stronger still is the argument of present fact. We have been hearing that there could never again be a great revival of religion. We have heard that the Church had become too intellectual for that; that emotionalism's day has passed; that God would come in some other way. As proof we have cited the splendid equipment and efforts which have of late apparently failed, time and again, in so-called revival campaigns. We have all of us denounced many hackneyed methods of forcing decision upon men. Our tastes have controlled our estimate of others, as well as God's, ways and means. But how was it on the day of Pentecost? What did men say about the disciples then? Did the disciples heed those words? What became of the cynics? What did that revival mean to Christianity? What has grown out of it? Are we realising

just now that when God works He works His way, not ours?

Is there not a need, an astounding need, of a genuine revival of religion? Do you not feel it? I do. The Church of God does. The world does.

Years ago when a great revival swept through Wales, it was said: "The present Welsh revival seems to be the outcome of the mighty workings of the Spirit of God. It has some of the characteristics of the first Pentecost. There is a strength, a buoyancy, a sanity about it that indicates a divine origin. It moves forward with but little machinery. It is independent of committees. The people themselves become evangelistic workers. It is a modern comment upon Paul's words: 'The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.' "

Again, an editorial commented: "The direct effects attributed to this marvellous movement, as the reports come in from all the district which has taken fire, indicate a stupendous total of moral effect. Every community in South Wales has felt the uplift, and all grades of society have been helped. The miners are almost transformed as a class. It is counted the most amazing effect of the work that swearing is no longer heard in the mines. Prayer meetings are held at the bottom of the shafts. Similar changes are seen in the tin mills. The saloons are almost deserted; theatres have lost patronage amazingly. The football season has been an utter failure; people went to the meetings instead of to the games. Among educated Welshmen agnostic ethical societies had of recent years come into great vogue; now they are generally disbanding. Sec-

tarianism has been rife in Wales, but now mutual suspicions are superseded by the most absolute spiritual unity. The rectors of the Church of England are among the most enthusiastic promoters of the revival meetings."

When Mr. Moody lived in our city years ago, and God's fire of revival so frequently swept sin away, some even of our leading preachers said, "It will amount to nothing." *They would not see.* Do not let formal habit or indifference blind you. Believe! Pray!

Christians, will you consider Jesus Christ your Master as the Master and Pre-eminent Leader of your whole life from this hour? Will you pray to-day without holding back any worldly desire, and will you confess Him? If so, God will fulfill His promises. (May I ask every head to be bowed, and each heart to weigh these words as I read them) :

"Ye have not because ye ask not."

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh."

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

"Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"

"Revive Thy work in the midst of the years—in wrath remember mercy."

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

VII

THE THOUGHTS OF GOD

"How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake I am still with Thee."—PSALM 139:17; 18.

A man's thoughts govern him. Wise then is he who controls his thought. Well may we join in the prayer of David as he closes this psalm, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts."

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." The thoughts show the real self. One of our English essayists has well said: "Observe what direction your thoughts and feelings most readily take when you are alone, and you will then form a tolerably correct opinion of your real self."

It is unquestionably true that the great majority of people in our day do little or no thinking beyond that which the momentary environment suggests. Even our educated men and women are inclined to think along the line which the business or profession of each day controls. Unless care is taken, our thinking becomes exceedingly narrow and limited. No better illustration of this is found than in the popular modern magazine. Here we find that quick illustration, suggestive and realistic, rather than finished and artistic, takes the place of that which was once demanded in literary

expression and correct style. Our newspapers plainly evidence the demand of the public for quick utterance and hasty reading. Men are too busy to do much thinking aside from that which they can turn into dollars and cents. The public seems to require other minds to think for it. Periodicals which condense and select for us are salable. Men want to see at a glance; to read as they run; to understand without the pressure of heavy thought. The movies are popular because they give us a novel in an hour and a half.

Our colleges, although equipped as never before with professors and instructors, specialists in distinctive lines, are lessening somewhat the tension and demand in those lines of study which count for discipline and mental training. The word practical has grown to have an immediate signification.

To-day, as never before, public utterance must not call upon men to think too long or too deeply, even in cities of highest scholastic name. Lectures are seldom popular which treat upon deep or philosophical subjects. There are exceptions, especially where the lecturer is famous, but the large audience, we fear, is often even then a result of the popular desire to be considered philosophical, and if the lecturer should happen, by chance, to take his eyes from his manuscript, he would undoubtedly be shocked to see many a nodding head.

Our theme this morning is "The Thoughts of God." They were precious to David; they have been precious to countless men. We read in the tenth Psalm that "God is not in all the thoughts of the wicked." These words this morning, then, cannot appeal to the man whose life is sinful wilfully and untrue selfishly. The

wrongdoer purposely leaves God out of his thoughts. Generally the wicked man does not think much, anyway. As Neander wrote :

His soul like bark with rudder lost,
On passion's changeful tide was tossed;
Nor vice nor virtue had the power
Beyond the impression of the hour;
And, oh! when passion rules, how rare
The hours which fall to virtue's share.

We read in Genesis of those days of ancient Noah, that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually, and God repented that he had made man."

If, however, we desire to seek God, He will be found. Isaiah says, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon." He continues: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

If then we are honest and desire to fix our minds upon God, His thoughts will become dear to us.

First: We should consider that God, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, has a definite prescribed mission to perform in calling to our remembrance the things which pertain to Jesus Christ. "The Comforter," Christ says, "shall teach you all things, and call to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

Our memories are treacherous; we cannot always depend upon them, but much of our thinking depends upon that which we remember. Christian character depends upon Christian thinking. If God Himself, as the Holy Spirit, controls our memory, He must control also our thinking. Thus, the Christian actually has "the mind of Christ." The Comforter helps us remember those things which will comfort in times of sorrow; also that which will stimulate to greater activity, when the human soul is indifferent. He suggests the tactful word at the right time. He uses our mind according to our best mental development, by exercising His will over us and suggesting our lines of action. Man does not act until he wills to act. If our wills are subject to His will, and our thoughts controlled by His thoughts, then we are led by His Spirit, and the thoughts of God make our lives consistent and powerful.

The temptation in the wilderness is an illustration of this very thing. The varied forces of the world strove to conquer the Son of Man. They were defeated. The Victor knew God's Word, and was filled with God's Spirit. Quickly the exact scripture was called to memory which refuted the words of the evil one. Human passion was controlled by divine leadership and inspiration. Finally, the Son of God commanded the evil one to depart, but this after Christ had clearly shown His entire submission to the divine will. The thoughts of God controlled His life and action.

Again, if God's thoughts control us, our every thought, as Paul tells us, "will be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"—every thought

brought into such obedience. The power of a thoughtful life is recognised, especially where thought and action coincide in a definite purpose. Great error is the result of occasional thoughtlessness. Many a good man has ruined his influence because of the word spoken, or the act committed in an unguarded moment.

The banker had been trusted for years. He had the confidence not only of the whole city, but his name touched other cities. He was ruined because of one act which was thoughtless. He was not on his guard when others depended upon him. The world could not forgive him as it would willingly have forgiven a child, because that single act disclosed a nature and character in which there was a possible weakness. Special temptation, unexpected emergency, must depend upon thoughtful and unerring character. If we have learned to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, our business life, our professional life, our personal life, will always be in harmony with the will of God.

Again, the Christian life calls for sacrifice which discriminates; the sacrifice which the best always demands. Life's good things must never rob us of life's better things; life's better things must never rob us of life's best things. The sacrifice must be a living sacrifice, not a giving up of life. When Paul wrote to the Romans, he said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing

of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

What did he mean by this? How can a man live such a life? How can he be a living sacrifice? Only as his mind is transformed. Worldly conformity will rob him of high thinking. If transformed by the renewing of his mind, his personal bodily life will acquiesce in his mental desire. There may be much plain living, but there will be also much high thinking. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This by bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ inevitably leads a man into a life of sacrifice, which creates within him the highest standard of Christian character.

The closing sentence of our text has still an added thought. David writes: "When I awake I am still with Thee." The start a man gets in the morning makes his day. What a wonderful gift is sleep. We retire overcome with fatigue and worn out with the weariness of a day's hard labour. When we open our eyes for a moment we cannot think where we are or what the day means. These first thoughts in the morning mean much in the moments and hours which follow.

Is God in your thoughts when you awake? Many a man instinctively repeats at night the prayer which his child-lips learned to utter, "Now I lay me down to sleep." Does he rise with a prayer to God and the thought of God in his heart? Life is a long road and the twists and turns we cannot designate by prophecy. Each step may reveal the unexpected. Is it not well for us to know that "He knows," and start each day

with the living triumphant faith which is effective? With David, may the thoughts of God be with us when we awake each morning!

Lastly, we must consider that those things which are precious unto us become increasingly endeared to us as we grow older. If the thoughts of God, in all their majesty, their glory, their might, their purity, their beauty, grow into our lives, and into our thinking, we shall grow all unconsciously like Him! "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

We do not know what heaven is, nor what it may have in store for us, but this we know, it will be the place where He is, where His thoughts are our thoughts, where His life and personality and work are pre-eminent. He demands from us the best we can give. He demands the pre-eminent place here. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Heaven will take care of itself, if we do our part here and to-day. To think with Him, for Him and by Him now will mean the omniscience of heaven, when "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

I plead this morning for a patient, thoughtful Christianity which shall result in that ultimate high standard of Paul, who could say, even with the loftiness of his ambition, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." It must mean that every thought is brought into His captivity and we, by the power of His Holy Spirit, will grow more and more like Him.

VIII

THE JOY OF RESTORATION

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.”—GALATIANS 6:1.

Paul seems to have gained the experience of Christ's truth. Christ had wonderful power in recognizing the worth in people who seemed to be worthless. He saw value in what the world regarded as valueless. The world to-day is inclined to disregard the value of human life save as it is demonstrated by efficiency. The world is inclined to disregard as valueless the life that has not attained, the one who has lived a certain number of years without attaining what is called success.

But Jesus Christ had the remarkable gift of foreseeing in many a life those valuable assets, which, once recognized and appropriated, meant a great deal for His Kingdom. For instance, how many men would have selected a man like Peter? If you and I had been leaders in the day of Jesus Christ, undoubtedly we would have gone to Jerusalem to find a man trained to the work. Jesus Christ went to the Sea of Galilee and picked out a rough, swearing fisherman to do that work, a man strong in his rugged characteristics, powerful in his physical strength, and He made him a great apostle. You and I would have been totally out of sympathy

with Saul of Tarsus and would have kept just as far away from him as we could. But Jesus Christ arrested him in his course and spoke to him firmly and with sympathy, commanding his loyalty and his life from that moment. This same man, Saul of Tarsus, the Paul who gives us our text, said: "Ye who are spiritual, restore such an one."

Go back again to Christ and see how He carried out this truth and how Paul gained His spirit. You remember how Christ found a woman leading a sinful life. The religious leaders of that day would have condemned her immediately to death, but the Lord Jesus Christ silenced every one by saying: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." He saw in a poor, wretched, wronged character a human spark of penitence and love, and it called forth from His heart a response, and an invitation to the higher life. This was totally unseen by those whose religion was merely formal and mechanical. Paul had also that spirit: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

The word "spiritual" has gained something of a sentimental meaning. It is a most abused word. Every new sect talks about its "spiritual" ethics. Every adroit heretic uses it freely and lays emphasis on his spiritual interpretation even if he is teaching rank infidelity. It is a word that is used by so many people to misrepresent instead of present its real significance.

The genuine spiritual life is not a theory; it is rather an attainment in aim and purpose. The spiritual life is

represented in the life that cries out to God for help and strength, and lives in Him. As the ninety-first Psalm says: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

This, then, is the spiritual life. Are we spiritually minded? To know, let us answer these questions: Do we find it a natural inclination in our lives to think about God before we close our eyes at night? Do we find it a natural expression and inclination of our lives to start the day with God before we rise in the morning, and before we enter upon the duties of the day, or see another face? There are many who have these desires, though they will admit it becomes a matter of habit, rather than desire. There are many people who want to be spiritual and to be like Christ who really let that want and desire substitute for attainment. It is one thing to have the inclination to meet God face to face in the morning, and at the close of the day; but it is another thing to have the experience. We form a correct and true opinion of our real selves if we consider the actual experience of our own lives when we are alone.

If we have the inclination to do these things we are spiritual minded, and if we have not we may gain it by habit. We would not enjoy the day if we did not cleanse our faces in the morning—it is the most natural thing to do; we would actually feel uncomfortable without it. But there are very many who are perfectly happy seemingly in neglecting this very thing. Many are not situated so that it is convenient for them to do so, but they could make it possible by an effort.

Now, it is not because it is not possible for us to be spiritual that we are not, but we have not formed the habit of letting it so become a part of our lives that we would never think of going without it. It is quite impossible, however, for one to experience a spiritual life, a Christian reality in life, and then go back to any other life and be happy. A spiritual life is a life that cannot exist without God, not simply a God that is everywhere, the God of the pantheist, who will tell you God is in yonder tree, as seen in bud and blossom. We, too, believe that God is a God of nature, but more than that. We have the fact that God is everywhere, the comprehension of all that life means and is, but He is our Father and Friend. If we are spiritually minded, we will not allow ourselves to live without God and without recognizing Him.

But God will not live where sin is. The impure life and the spiritual life cannot go together. Impurity drives away the thought of God, and it does something worse than that; it distorts the human vision so that God cannot be recognized. Have you ever stood before a concave or convex mirror which distorts your face and figure so that it makes a caricature of your entire body? That is what sin does; it distorts—not the vision, but that which represents the vision—so that you are incapable of seeing the real as it is. That is why a sinner, when he sees and hears the truth, does not want to look or listen.

But the spiritual life makes the vision of God normal so that distorted conditions no longer exist. You have a pain in your head, and cannot tell why; you have thought perhaps your physical system was weak, and

that pain is caused by blood centring in the back of your brain. Then the pain suddenly shifts and you suffer in the side of your head; or, at times you feel dizzy and your vision becomes indistinct. Some one advises you to go and see an oculist. You go, and after examining your eyes he tells you to put on glasses. He adjusts them and your headache stops. The trouble has been with your eyes. You have been forcing the muscles to do work which was too strong for them, and you have been trying to adjust your sight with a wrong vision; but now the glasses have corrected the wrong.

Many people are thus discussing their spiritual capability by forcing themselves to see what God could easily adjust if they would let Him. If we will just let the presence of God become a reality! Let sin go out and God come in—we will have a normal view of the spiritual life and will seek to do as God planned and arranged.

Natural tendency is to criticise others. It is the most natural thing in the world. I remember a just rebuke I once had. I was speaking of a rather laughable experience. Probably I had told it a dozen times. The man of whom the story was told was a friend, and it was told simply as a joke; but the friend to whom I told it replied: "Why do you tell that? It may be a good joke, but after all it carries with it the thought that our friend spoiled a good time, ruined a lovely occasion by his thoughtlessness." He added: "We are both very fond of that man, and his friends are ours, but now it will be an effort to think or speak of him."

without recalling this incident, and I wish I hadn't heard it."

His frankness taught me a great lesson. What is the use? I have a motto in my study: "Forget it; it may not be true." A lot of things we should forget; they may not be true.

Even more important is the fact that spiritually minded men and women aim to glorify their Lord. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, the spiritually minded man is looking for God's glory. He will cut out of his own life a great many things which his own inclination would place there.

Now, see how this is related to other lives. Human nature is weak. The weakness of human nature is not confined to those lacking in will-power, although it is undoubtedly true that the weak-minded sin a great deal more than those who have strong will-power; hence, they need a great deal more help. The Christian ought to be ready early and late to help others.

Call to mind the poor man who fell among thieves. A Scribe passed by, a Levite passed by, and then a good man, a Samaritan, came along and helped that poor man. Many men have fallen among thieves of dishonesty, thieves of evil companionship. Many a man has fallen among thieves of poverty. A lad was standing on the street corner shivering, indecision and sadness in his face. Near by a man was standing. In a sudden burst of conversation and natural good-fellowship he said: "My lad, are you waiting for the car?" "No, I am not waiting for a car—I'm tired to death. I'm just waiting." "Well, you will freeze to

death if you stand there in the cold. Put on a coat." "I haven't a coat," the other said. "Well, then, why don't you walk?" "I have walked until I'm tired out; if I freeze to death, I will freeze to death." "What is the matter with you anyway?" asked the man. "I don't know," replied the lad. "I haven't anything to do; I haven't anywhere to go, and I won't beg. I may die—death isn't at all troublesome to me. I won't take my life because God gave it to me, and I haven't any right to take it." That was all. He would not accept help, nor would he ride, and so they walked together. Finally, the man found out the truth, that the worst enemy the fellow had was poverty! That man helped his friend to work, and poverty fled.

I took down a book from the shelf the other day and read a few pages. The author was trying to say that poverty is always the result of sin; but it is not. For some reason or other that lad had not had what you and I call a chance. We do not know what was the matter. Because just as soon as that lad was given a chance, he succeeded splendidly, and he is an honoured man to-day. He just needed a little help and a little human sympathy. But, you say, he was an exception, one in a hundred. That is like many another remark—ninety-nine out of a hundred, or nine out of ten; we say these things, and they don't mean anything. I know that he was an exception, but I know that poverty had become his fate. We do not know enough of his story to know what happened to place him where he was, but we know this, that he was a type. And we know that such cases are on every side of us. Poor people do not want to be patronised; the man or woman

who will be patronised is not worthy of help. Do not be patronising. "I'll help you," you say, and the proud man answers: "I do not want your help; I am a man myself." But they do want human sympathy and a chance. They want confidence and love and something to do. Restore men to God by restoring them to themselves.

You will be fooled sometimes. Well, what if you are? The man whom you tried to help never forgets your act. We must restore people. What if a man does sin and fall? Even then you and I ought to seek to restore him. You say: "He has fallen, and it is all over with him." All over? It is a good deal harder to be patient with a man than to denounce him because he has failed. You cannot win a dog's affection by kicking him; you cannot gain human beings by scorning them when they have slipped. What the fallen man needs is confidence and patience. If a man has fallen among the thieves of his own wretched habits, how do you know how hard he has fought for years to conquer? He may be making ten times as brave a fight to stand on his feet as you have ever made.

Some one said: "I would be ashamed to be seen walking with a drunkard." Well, I would not. I would rather walk with a drunkard than to lose the chance of restoring him. What you and I need in this world is the wish and patience of Jesus Christ to restore men. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of restoration.

Do you realise that power of restoration may be sifted down to restoration in your own life? I remember the first time I ever heard Mr. Moody. I was

eleven years old. I used to sing alto; I loved to sing. They asked me if I would not sing in the Moody choir, and I sang until I was ashamed to stand up alone among so many women. I remember what he said in substance. He said: "Some of you people here have not the thrill that that boy has when he sings." He pointed to me, and I wished I could get out. He continued: "You have not the same thrill and joy." I have never forgotten it. I did not know then but now I know exactly what he meant. I felt it then, but it was all so natural. I have oftentimes wanted to feel it since then. I remember one of the old pieces we used to sing:

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.

I remember another of those songs that used to thrill me. I never heard a church choir thrill me as those songs did. The other song ran like this:

Now just a word for Jesus,
'Twill help us on our way;
One little word for Jesus,
Oh, speak, or sing, or pray.

What a simple thing it is, yet it thrills me. And why? It is associated with the songs of my boyhood. Now, you, too, have had that thrill of religious faith at times. It may have been something that seemed to lift you right out of yourself and forced you to say: "I want to be better. I want to fight this thing out now." You think you have gotten beyond it. Your life has become calloused, but I tell you, we need it,

every one of us needs it. God is willing to restore unto us the joy of Himself if we will let Him.

To-morrow morning I go as a pastor and friend to a home in this church to stand by one, a loved mother, who for many years has been all that a mother could be. She was the widow of the one who led the singing here for so many years, and whose life and song meant so much to this congregation. She has passed on now to be with him and her Master. Why, do you know, I cannot go to that service to-morrow morning without schooling myself to control my emotion, because it takes me back to my own mother and my own home. Some of you have had the same experience. It is the thrill of recognition of human love as God lives in the lives of those whom we love, and who have given their best selves to us.

Men and women, we need it. He will restore unto us the joy of salvation if we will let Him. Some of you people here to-night have not been connected with a church for years. You have been out of touch with the living activity of the Church of God, and still you were dedicated to Christ as little children. You once joined the Church of God, but in the restlessness of a great city the weeks and the years have passed by, and you have forgotten God. He will restore unto you the joy of His salvation if you will let Him.

And the last thought is this: In trying to restore others and in restoring yourself you will realise the wonderful forgiveness of God and the sins of your own heart.

You know the fifty-first Psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; accord-

ing unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." And then in the twelfth verse David says: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Do you know how David happened to write that Psalm? David, the King, had committed a most dastardly deed. He had forgotten his God; overcome by a wicked passion he had placed a soldier, the husband of one of the women of his own nation, in the front rank of the battle in order that he might be slain, and then he took that man's wife to be his wife. It was as if he had murdered a man loyal to him, a patriot. And yet, when he realised the awful wickedness of his sin, he cried out to God in anguish and in penitence: "Have mercy upon me, O God, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

Prisoners condemned to death have given their hearts to God and have died simple-hearted, loving Christians. I care not what your sin or mine may be or have been. What we need is the restoration of the life of the Master in our hearts and lives.

Men and women, I plead with you to repent, no matter what the sin. Oh, let Him restore you! Then you will be out in the world early and late, day after day, to seek to restore others who need the salvation of our God through Jesus Christ.

IX

MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE

“If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.”—EXODUS 33:14-15.

In those early days of long ago, history was not read as it is to-day. The literature of life was limited and largely the composite of the man's experience transmitted from mouth to ear. Some of the nations had their literature, it is true, as certain hieroglyphics and characters cut in ancient stones, and ancient manuscripts reveal to us, but those ancient indications reveal little of the associations men had with one another. But they were taught the knowledge of God, among the great leaders of Israel, even before Israel was a nation. And especially this great leader, whom God so signally called, was one in reality of faith and in the power of a living word; for he believed God. Whether it was the burning bush, that bush which is the emblem of the Scottish and the Helvetian churches, or other experiences, it was the evidence of the presence of God who spoke in every experience of his life and nature. Every forward step in the history of the Israelites manifested the presence of God.

The great sins of nations have been the sins which have been subtle in influence. These are the sins that have steadily destroyed. Remember when that prophet

of old would not curse the Israelites, although great results and a great reward were offered him, how once and again he went before God, even when God told him he should bless Israel, and although he did not dare to curse Israel, he did something worse! Balaam taught the children of Israel to pretend to be religious and then give their lives over to impurity and wrongdoing. And a curse fell upon that people through the influence of a so-called prophet, because, under the pretense of religion, he allowed them to break God's laws in immoral practices.

The evidence of history has been that the most vital sins are those that creep steadily into our lives because of wrong purpose. Thus the subtle influence of sin and ambition and wrong depletes unconsciously, and injures and destroys that which should upbuild and construct for God,—not because we wish it, but because we are yielding to those things which lead us from God.

Now, God did not say that money was the root of all evil. Money is one of the greatest blessings in all the world; but the love of money, the coveting of money is where the sin lies. If a man seeks money that he may use it for the best interests of his home, of the community, of the Church of Christ, God will honour and bless him. There are thousands of men who are using their money for these very purposes. Many a man, like that good man of old who took his own tomb and placed the Saviour's remains within it! He could never have given that tomb if God had not blessed him temporarily. Thousands of men are in this world whom God has so blessed, and they are honouring Him.

My dear people, I say with all my heart that the very opportunities which are ours from our surroundings, which are so dear to us in the sacred associations of life, and so many of them dear to us in this old building, we could never have attained unless men and women of large heart and abundant means had made them possible. God has given them to us, not only in the erection of a building, but this church has had the heritage for over forty years in her interest in the work of our city and the world—you have been willing to worship in inadequate surroundings in order to do more for the community and the world.

The new growth and development of this work would never have been possible if we had not had the same vision, the same faith, and the willing assistance of those whom God has blessed and honoured. But with our blessings we are warned of our dangers.

The subtle sin is when those who are receiving His blessings and the gifts of wealth are interested increasingly in the things pertaining only to this life, without sharing the right proportion of their blessings with the far-reaching interests of God. The future of a church is not related to its externals, not primarily to its buildings, nor to its form of worship; but, to the spiritual strength and growth of its members. Men and women growing up within its membership must be strong in their belief of His Son; they must seek first the things which pertain to God and realise God's presence amid the actual realities in life.

It is not strange that Moses was perplexed, and that those related to him wondered how God could lead them. I wonder if we can begin to conceive what it

meant to realise the responsibility resting on him because of the weakness of so many who did not trust him; the weakness of so many who were influenced by circumstantial conditions!

The Lord said unto Moses, "Depart, and go up hence." God believed in him, and Moses believed in God! But there was a mutual relationship that became actual because of God's presence in his life. Then the assurance was back of it: "Fear not, I will go with thee, I will be with thee." That man was not merely an individual, not merely a great military genius! Read Josephus and some of the other historians, and you will find that this man, this same Moses, was able to lead a great host of Egyptians against the Ethiopians. He was trained with splendid character and self-discipline and influence, but he needed more. He was skilled in scholarship and his attainments were the result of long and severe training. He was beautiful to look upon, aside from the strength of his manliness. Historians tell us that workmen used to get up early in the morning and walk two or three miles out of their way that they might get a look at the young Moses, and see the beauty and strength in his countenance. But, with all his splendid equipment, he could not lead Israel. He was afraid; he needed God. "Fear not, I will go with thee, I am with thee."

When he went up, with that sacred purpose and heroic aim, he said, "Lord, take me not up hence unless Thou goest with me." Then look back and see two men fighting together, and one conquering the other. Moses stepped in and used his power. And then again he intervened another time, and one said: "Who made

thee governor over us?" His own people disregarded him. Then God sent him to the wilderness. Then see him in that Sinai desert where those great rocks rise majestically to the skies, and where he watches the eagle in her eyrie. See him as he climbs those great heights and looks down upon those eaglets in their nests! As he sees the wilderness of the storms! Moses is really learning the glory of his God as he is alone with Him in the desert at Sinai; and there he learns to trust God. See him when the time came when God called him; see his brow as it knits; as he forsakes Egypt; he thinks of the responsibilities before him. Then he says, "Lord, I love my people. I know their hands are worn, their bodies bleeding and their backs have felt the whip of the taskmaster! I will leave Egypt, for I choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

That was the type of a man he was: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.

And now this man of God faces the problem of his life and says, "Suffer me not to go hence unless Thou go with me." And the reassuring word comes back in our theme, "My presence shall go with thee."

The living faith in the future is the conviction of the present. To-day we live—to-morrow we die. *No, we do not!* For "he that believeth on me shall never die."

What words! Take them in their exactness: "He that believeth *shall never die.*" But to-day is the living of them. To-morrow is God's. What of the morrow? How little we know! The stones which we build one

upon another fit in their places. The buildings which we erect, the associations of the material world, in time crumble to dust, but something is never destroyed. The character which you put into your child, and which you cultivate and develop, lives in the child, and on in his child, and on in his child, to the hundreds of generations; and thus we build stones one upon another, and this temple is erected that you and I may honor God with permanent characters.

Thus nations are made, and thus history is made, and this is the crowning blessing of Almighty God. How do we dare go up hence unless His Spirit go with us? "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight."

And just a word as we look back. One day, on one of the great famous mountains of Switzerland, after the helpful machinery of electricity and a long climb, we reached the summit. But it was all cloud and mist; not a single vision-point. We had heard of the richness of the great Bernese Overland with its matchless splendor and its changing colors. But not a sight. All was mist. And then, suddenly, by a mere accident, as it were, we gained a vista through the cloud; just as if a great archway had been created, and there the vast Overland reached a hundred miles into the vista, with its rich color and majesty; and then, the mist again, and all was gone—but the sight we have never forgotten.

Look for a moment, for this service is not one of eulogy, not one of sadness; look for a moment through the vista of years, and see what is before us. Reaching back—not forty years, but more—to the blending of this church in her union from those

churches which had been related to us, those south of us; read the names of the saints of God. But this will come later in the historical relationships that we are to talk about in the week to come.

Paul's great words: "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before," were not spoken as he considered the errors and failings of his life, but were given to us just after he had repeated the noble conditions in his life which made him first among his people in inheritance and blessing. "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comformable unto his death: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have

apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It is only a look, but close for a moment your eyes and see and think of those whose names are indelibly written upon the history of this church, whose lives and characters make sacred the associations of the past. It is not at all strange that some have said, "I want my old pew." It is not strange that some should cling to the associations that are here. The constant communion services as they have sped month by month; the birth of children and their coming into the church; the baptising of little children who now have grown into manhood and womanhood, and whose own little children have been baptised here. You remember last Thanksgiving—or it may have been Christmas—one of those who united with us was the fourth generation to unite with this church.

Think of what it means. The vista is ours, and we should have the warmth of a father's love! And God is everywhere with us. "My presence shall go with thee." Eternal in structure. My vital thought in the divine purpose for any and all the members and officers of this church is to establish the reality of God's sacred Truth; "Come up hence; I will be with thee." "My presence shall abide with thee."

(Preached by Dr. Stone the last Sunday in the Old Fourth Church.)

X

THE APPEAL OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

“Then said I, Here am I; send me.”—ISAIAH 6:8.

In considering a subject such as this one, it is usually necessary for a speaker to gain the confidence of his audience before he can impress them with a sense of personal responsibility. May I ask you to give me a frank, sympathetic hearing from the very first?

I come to you from the thick of active work in a large city parish, and I assure you I would rather be at work there now than speaking here, for I have always discredited the man who is more anxious to be heard or seen away from home than at home and working at his job.

The importance of this subject, however, warrants earnest thought and general as well as individual attention. It is not to be relegated to those who have decided to study for the ministry or enter mission fields, but must be faced also by those who aim to make the most of their lives and have not decided what to do.

Jesus Christ is worthy of the best the nation has, and needs able men, with strong bodies, alert minds and pure hearts to do His work in ministering to the world.

At one time Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Amherst and other leading colleges sent a large percentage of their sons into the ministry. This is not so to-day. In

recent decades the smaller denominational institutions have taken a far lead in providing these men. In some of our Western States it is reported that more men without college training are now ordained as ministers than those who have had academic study. This question demands thought and the thought of men who are now studying in our American colleges. Here is a field fitted to every type of man and a field which needs men of strength and character; men who are willing to "endure hardness," and men who are not afraid of work. The old popular falsity that any man can enter the ministry, especially the man who cannot succeed at other things, is worn out. It never was true, but it is farther from the truth now than ever. A man who cannot succeed in almost anything he undertakes is not the man we need, but rather the man who can succeed elsewhere will succeed here and is needed. Men are succeeding in the ministry to-day who could and would succeed anywhere, and are in countless instances giving up opportunities which are attractive, fascinating and lucrative.

We ask you first to consider *the limit of life as related to death*.

Estimating three generations to a century, almost sixty generations have gone since Jesus Christ was born. We understand sixteen hundred millions of people inhabit the earth to-day. The sixty generations mean that over ninety billion people have lived and died since Christ came.

The preaching of the Gospel takes on astounding proportion where such a task, past, present and future, faces us. The ministers and missionaries, above all

other men, are set apart to proclaim and reveal the mystery and truth of life and death to men, and yet no other calling is looked upon so carelessly and indifferently by the majority of men and students. "Life and Immortality" were brought to light by Jesus Christ, and these for the world. If a man lives his seventy or eighty years, with fifty or sixty of them in active service, what does it all amount to if he is only an accumulator, a collector, or a seeker and gatherer of things, called pleasure, goods or money?

When death comes he leaves it all. But if he has used his life aright and influenced others aright that influence and life will stretch out into eternal and everlasting force.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, *leave behind us—*"

These are the worth-whiles of life. No work nor calling exists which compares with the minister's opportunity to set in perpetual motion moral and worthy forces centring in the very life of the future and an eternal future.

Again, the appeal is made to you to consider the Gospel ministry because of *the reawakened conscience of spiritual values*.

Men are conscious of a great need. Editors, educators, business men—all are asking, what can and will correct the disorders of society? What will prevent the recurrence and growth of crime and lawlessness? Sin has just wrought a world-wide international devas-

tation and disorder. Material dependence seems suicidal. Spiritual value has become self-assertive.

From the "Wall Street Journal" to the soap-box orator men are calling for a new order "wherein dwelleth righteousness." Studying the philosophy of religion has not given it to men. The conscience is aroused and the heart and intellect are sensitive to the appeal of the Spirit of God, and everywhere the world is seeking men *who know God* to lead them.

The Church of Christ is making a new appeal to men. Churches by the score have more men in them than women. Men with a message and spiritual vision are attracting men and guiding this new conscience into faith and service. This wave is gaining size and force, and it sweeps on with tidal proportion. A new conscience demands a new devotion, and a new commitment of men of training, purpose and power.

This leads us to the *appeal of the world's need*.

This, of course, is the old and controlling argument, and it ever will be. An unmet need will never be less nor more silent a need. God sent His Son to save the world, and that world is not yet saved. Never have we known that need as now. The printed page, the open book, the myriad voices who proclaim, the daily press, the wires of the telegraph and telephone, the wireless, the radio, the ocean steamers, the post-office systems which fill the whole earth—these all tell and re-echo the world's need.

Superstition, idolatry, ignorance, immorality, famine, disease, crime, prejudice, jealousy, deceit, slavery and above all, war, with all its deeds and effects, force

upon us the need the old world has for the saving, constructing power of Christian character and life.

Who can lead and assist in meeting this need better than a trained and tried ministry?

Growing out of this world-need a double appeal develops: it is the appeal of the *unattained* and the appeal of the *unattempted*. These have the spirit of the pioneer in them.

Why do we love to read Francis Parkman's histories? Because they appeal to the pioneer in us. He writes of men who attempted the unattained and unattempted.

In the mountains or deep woods, we can get back where the foot of man has not trod, or where only the red man has stalked, and there we love to go, and why? Because there is a fascination in the unattained. This is a natural human inclination, but when linked to faith and purpose it becomes a mighty and irresistible force. It sent out Carey and Moffat and Henry Martyn as pioneers over a century ago. It has been sending out men of vision ever since. It discovered this new world through Columbus. It guided the Mayflower and landed the Pilgrim Fathers.

When I was a lad of high school age, and even later, when in Amherst College, there was a very popular book written by Professor Matthews entitled "Getting On in the World." Many a college essay and oration found its suggestion in those pages. How well I remember what it said in substance as to the power of the unattained. This theme meant much to the college students of those days. It was in those days that the Student Volunteer Movement, the Morning Watch and

kindred movements were born. They were generated in the enthusiasm of this great power of the unattained.

Such purpose sent Adolphus Good to the West African Mission, and Wilder and Foreman to India, and the Ewings to India, and Stead to Persia, and Rodgers to the Philippines. It put men of brain, brawn and breeding into the ministry as well—men who saw a great work to be done and gave themselves freely, even if they could do but a small part of it.

This appeal of the *unattained* is, as we have seen, closely associated with the appeal of the *unattempted*. The old missionary who made his motto, "Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God," had the vision. He was not willing to let God act without acting himself. His great expectations were his great attempts, and he never let the precedent of the unattempted quell his enthusiasm.

The unattempted for God and man will always be the chance which faces the man of size and character. Once when preaching at Princeton, during the leadership of Mr. Wilson, he mentioned a remarkable sermon recently preached by Dr. Richards, then pastor of the Brick Church in New York. The subject was "The Monotony of Sin." He told how every form of sin was old long ago; the ancient cities of Nineveh and Babylon knew all forms of sin. It had lost its originality. But when a human life comes into touch with Jesus Christ new discoveries in righteousness develop, for a new personality comes into contact with divine wisdom and suggestion. The unattained is attempted, and only God knows how great the result and how marvellous the influence may be.

The unattempted for God is a future opportunity in the Christian ministry as never before. God and man want ministers and men who *are different*. We want men who are not afraid of new problems, who glory in difficulties, who face the future, hard as it may be, with determination and a smile, who "know no future but God," who "act, act in the living present, heart within and God o'erhead." Men, who like Abraham of old, go out "they know not where," but go with vigour and faith to attempt for God the unattempted.

This is not of necessity a call from afar, nor a call to cross the desert or the sea. The hardest task to-day may be in one's own state or city; in fact, at one's very door. The ministry at home needs able and independent men to guide and reinforce the strategic centres so swiftly building in the growth of our day.

Who knows what God may do with those who will trust Him, giving themselves *wholly* to his direction! The power of God follows the attempts of men when faith, will, diligence and consecration unite.

Some years ago a student of Princeton was riding past Lawrenceville on the Trenton trolley when he was addressed by his seatmate and in the conversation was asked to go out to India to help in the work they were trying to do at Allahabad. The agricultural opportunity was undeveloped and unattempted. He went, and now the work of Sam Higginbottom is known from sea to sea. He has done as much, if not more, to revolutionise the soil-cultivation of India and help the native in his native soil as any living man, and the end is not yet.

In Chicago we have a man, still young, who came to

our city about a dozen years ago. He was unknown and inexperienced, save in a small church where he had begun his ministry in a small suburban city, but he was an attempter. This man has built up one of the strongest and liveliest church organisations in the Central West and they are soon to build their new church. He was not over strong, nor particularly gifted, but he was a man of large faith, unlimited vision, industrious energy and willing attempt. He has built himself and his church into our city and its problems. His influence cannot be estimated. He is honoured, respected and beloved.

Others like him are doing the same thing with their own personalities and gifts all over the nation. The young men in the ministry to-day are becoming a power in so far as they are men of God, men of the Word, and men who live with and like Jesus Christ, but they need reinforcement.

The appeal of the Gospel ministry has always evidenced the heroic. Courage has characterised the ministry from the days of Stephen and St. Paul. The front rank means courage, and ever will.

“Move to the fore,
Say not another is fitter than thou,
Shame to thy shrinking, up, face thy task now.
Own thyself equal to all a soul may.
Cease thy evading, God needs thee to-day.

“Move to the fore.
God Himself waits and must wait till thou come;
Men are God’s prophets tho’ ages lie dumb;
Halts the Christ kingdom with conquests so near?
Thou art the cause then, thou soul in the rear,
Move to the fore.”

When I was a pastor in Baltimore, many years ago, a student from the Johns Hopkins Medical attracted my attention and won my admiration and affection. He came across the city, rain or shine, faithfully attended our services at Brown Memorial Church, and among other things started a normal class for Bible study in our Bible school.

During his course of four years he diligently read and studied books on China, India, Africa, Siam, Japan, South America and other countries. Whenever I asked him where he was going he seemed uncertain. His strong personality, winsome independence, striking endurance, evident unselfishness and unflinching but humble faith were notable.

One day he asked me if I cared if he did not go out under our own denominational board, and receiving the answer that that was, after all, secondary, he volunteered the information that he wanted to go to Arabia. "Why Arabia?" was asked. "Well," came the honest reply, "it's the hardest field I can find and one of the most needy, and nobody else seems to want to go there." He went. About that time Dr. Samuel Zwemer, that blessed minister of Jesus Christ and great heroic soul, was transferred from Arabia to take charge of all the work among the followers of Islam, and was stationed in Cairo in Egypt. This same Dr. Paul Harrison, fresh from Johns Hopkins, practically took his place, and from Dr. Zwemer's own lips came the testimony after three years that "Harrison is a prince, one of the most useful Christian forces in that vast untouched country of history, desert and need." Read Harrison's article on Arabia in a recent

number of "The Atlantic Monthly" if you would know this modern hero.

Once when operating on a famous Arabian the need quickly arose of transmitting a delicate bit of flesh from the living to save a life. When others hesitated this medical man and minister himself volunteered, letting others finish the operation, and thus saved the life. That Arabian gave the Lord the glory and declared he had never known such faith and love before, nor seen this kind of Christianity revealed.

When I was speaking at his University, the University of Nebraska, last fall they cheered him, twelve hundred strong, at a gathering of students, and one full-souled student shouted amidst the applause, "Men like Paul Harrison have put college on the map."

This type of men is needed in America as well as in Arabia, and the reflex influence of their lives is needed in our colleges to inspire other red-blooded, vital men to follow their example. Sometimes when I looked at the men in McCormick Seminary, where I had the privilege of teaching last fall for a friend who was ill, I thanked God for the type of men who are responding to the call and going out to preach the irresistible Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is the heroic task for you men to consider. Your influence here and now in influencing your college mates is far greater than you know. One year at Northfield, yes, a dozen years ago, I saw a lad sitting in the front row who seemed uneasy and restless. Dr. Grenfell was speaking that night on "The Heroic in Service." Soon the fellow, whose face showed his high calibre, was won. He became intensely interested.

After the meeting he was eager to be introduced to Dr. Grenfell. I walked away with the lad. "Father wants me to go to Europe next year," he volunteered. He had graduated from Cornell the June before. "But after to-night's talk," he said, "I'm going back to college and get hold of the Fraternity bunch," and he did. In November I had a postal from Ted Mercer which read, "Eight hundred Frat men out to-night to hear me," and then he added the name of this man, saying, "he is responsible for it."

Young men, now is your biggest influence. To decide now means to influence the other fellow. To consider this appeal seriously means to call it to the attention of the other men in college and university.

Before closing this appeal I want to impress you with the *emergency* of this call. The emergency man is one of the most valuable men to his time. The Gospel ministry will always need recruits, but these days of uncertainty, these difficult readjustment and reconstruction days are extreme in their need. As one who sees and feels and experiences the need, I appeal to you men of student life. I appeal to all types and kinds. God can use you. Not only the scholarly men, the eloquent men, the pious men, but all of you. He needs rugged Peters just as much as business and executive Matthews. He needs faithful Lukes and magnetic, passion-filled, vision-souled Johns. *We are facing a great emergency.*

Did you ever see an unassisted triple play on the baseball field? I never saw but one. The third baseman seemed to anticipate, to have some intuition. This

sort of sixth sense makes great players in every game of life. It creates the emergency man. He should have played up nearer second, but the game was intense. The outfield had played the first half of the ninth; the score was six to four in their favour. The team at bat was playing its last half of the ninth. No one was out. The bases were full, every runner taking a good lead. Their heaviest batter was up. The pitcher swung; the third baseman, quite out of the ordinary, ran over and covered third; the batter put a hard high liner right over third like a cannon ball; it looked like a deep field hit; each runner was off! The third baseman went up in the air with his gloved hand, nailed the ball, came down on the bag, reached out and touched the man speeding from second over third for home; threw down his glove, walked in; it was all over. One, two, three, unassisted. The crowd didn't realise, was paralysed, then went mad, and the third baseman was carried high on the shoulders of his comrades from the field.

He was an emergency man. Are you? The game is on. It is intense. We're ahead, but the bases are full. Hardhitting men are at bat. With the mind and power of Jesus Christ you can be an emergency man! Will you?

Students of Wabash College, yours has been an earnest history. Together with other college men you have an Alma Mater and a name of which to be proud. Your sons, like the sons of my Alma Mater, Amherst have been in the past leaders in the ministry, as in every field. Will you follow on? Will you help our Champion, Jesus Christ, when and where most He needs

you? Will you think and pray upon the great subject of this appeal, and will you join us who are spending our lives, and that right heartily and happily, for God and men in the Gospel ministry of Jesus Christ?

(First lectures on "The Ministry" under the John N. Mills foundation at Wabash College.)

XI

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GREAT RICHES

"All these things have I observed; what lack I yet?"—MATTHEW 19:20.

This story of the rich young ruler who came to the Master seeking the inheritance of eternal life is one of the most popular and influential stories of all Gospel writing. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record it. There is a naturalness and tenderness in the story which appeal to all. The question which the rich young ruler sought to have answered, the one great question deep down in the human heart, ever remains. What is immortality? What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?

A fellow minister recently repeated the conversation of a companion seated near him on his journey from California. The man was a noted character in the public humour of the day and was well known in the moving picture world, but a rough, coarse man. He was telling of a great contract which awaited him in the east and how after he had met his engagement he would be paid a large amount of money.

"Well," said my friend, "what then?"

"Oh," he said, "then I am going to settle down for a good time and have all the fun that is coming to any man—live on my wealth, and do what I please."

My friend said in reply, "And what then?"

"Oh," he said, "I will do a little work now and then, but with money enough to live on I am going to retire and grow old comfortably."

"But what then?"

"Oh," he said, "I suppose I shall grow old and make the most of it."

My friend still persisted: "And what then?"

Whereupon the man arose somewhat uneasily and said: "Well, we won't go into that," and he went up into the smoker.

It is the same old question—What must I do to inherit eternal life? But instead of coming from a careless, thoughtless spendthrift who had made money easily, it came to the Saviour from a well-to-do young man who was earnest as to his future, who wished to know the price of service in attaining eternal life. The commandments which the Saviour selected in reply to his question are notable ones. They relate to the rights of mankind; to the order of society; to purity of life; to honesty among men; to the protection of the home, and that other great command added which touched the neighbourliness of life, and which answers all questions of strife, whether among men or nations: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The young man had been true to these commands; he had lived a consistent life; but something was lacking. "What lack I yet?" he asked the Master. Then came a clear, specific statement of his sins. The Master uncovered to him the bare, actual tragedy of his life, all unseen and unknown, for it was covered by good deeds and other consistent living. "Go, sell that which

thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

The philosopher of old said: "Not one penny can we take with us into the unknown land." No matter what the wealth of this rich young ruler, it was not enough to gain an entrance into that eternity of life where God forever dwells with his own. Doctor Johnson once said, "Attainment is followed by neglect and possession by disgust." He might have added, "Mere attainment is followed by neglect and mere possession by disgust."

This young man, with all his rich possession and his earnest life, was possessed by these things, instead of possessing them. His attainment was followed by neglect, his possession by disgust, and he went away sorrowful. The greatest peril of possession is in its control: it controls mankind; it controls us, instead of allowing us to control it.

The war so recently finished is not ended in principle, even if ended in arms. The Great War is not one of physical strife, ammunition, and equipment: it is a great strife between materialism and principle. What the nations have failed to do with arms and battleships they are seeking to do with the mind and heart of man, and this has been the policy and philosophy from the beginning. The faith of the world is undermined by the emphasis placed upon mere materialism. There has been no penitence nor armistice along this line. Materialism is subtle and keen in her determination to undermine spiritual force in her attainment of the spiritual ideal. This is the constant and compelling argument of materialism. In her logic, possession is

the aim of life; material accumulation surpassing value of attainment. Possessed by this insane and wicked avarice, nations may betray the world by false philosophy, unconscious of the destruction which has been brought upon themselves by its aim and use. This would disunite the nations in creating within mankind individually the selfish assertiveness of personal rights, and would lead men away one from another in an ambition to regulate their own affairs and control their own possessions.

We are not here to assert that the League of Nations will solve the problem, but we are here to assert that a compact of Nations, whether this or another, must relate itself to our own problem as we consider the problems of others, for nations as well as men must follow the rule "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

We are living in times of great necessity. The problems of men, cities and nations; the problems of capital and labour; the problems of railroad control, and all that goes with the related problems of transportation and commerce, are entering into the thoughts and relationship of men as never before. Great men must see eye to eye, solving these great problems and discovering mutual benefit one for another. Whether *the* League of Nations, or *a* League of Nations, there need be no disregard of the great national rights of individual nations, no disregard of the great independent and related rights of all nations. There is no reason why a League of Nations should interfere with the Monroe Doctrine, or disregard the great primal principles of our Constitution. We must be loyal to the future and loyal to others, as we conserve the noble

statutes of the past, and regard with responsibility our own national and individual trust.

This even brings more clearly before us our subject. The perils of possession may rob us of the possession of the control of our time. Great Britain has learned many things which we have not as yet learned, just as we have learned many things in which we may instruct her. Among these lessons is that of the strong, able man giving his strength and intelligence to the nation. He may disregard his individual problems as he retires; but he must retire into the larger service, with all his gifts and abilities for the nation.

I well remember, years ago, standing by an English lawn as several elderly men were bowling on the green. I remember one man, of marked personality and apparent age, with his silk cap and his grey beard, as he bowled his ball. His personality and bearing attracted me, and upon inquiring who he was, I learned that he was a great English shipbuilder, but was retired and was now giving his entire time to the interests of the nation. He bowled every day to keep himself in physical trim for the great responsibilities that were his. His possessions were not controlling him, but he was controlling his possessions. He was giving himself wholly to the nation in her great need and in her great problems.

This is a lesson which we need to learn here in America, and which we are beginning to learn increasingly. The great enterprises of our own nation require the ablest thinking and the best minds of our well-trained, mature leaders. As men have given themselves to the great needs of the nation now in working with-

out reward for the government; as men have faced the great issues of the Liberty Loan, the Red Cross, and other national calls; as men have left office and home to take up the great responsibilities in our National City, so men must continue to face the needs of the nation in their own home cities and townships, and meet those problems heroically and with great sacrifice of time, *giving themselves* instead of buying the time of others to meet the great demands of the present.

What if our great cities should find able, strong, inspiring leaders who would give themselves unsparingly to the great tasks, such as the mayoralty, instead of allowing such leading positions to become the mere wrangling centres for politicians with selfish interests? This must be the standard if we are to attain and overcome the peril of possession in the use of our time.

Then there is the peril of controlling our thoughts, of allowing our possessions in business to control all our thinking. There are those who think of nothing but dollars and cents. They are wearied when prominent thoughts are brought to them other than those relating to their business responsibilities. They are so weary in mind that they fall asleep as they think of other subjects. The great problems of human relationship, the intercessions of men and organized activity do not seem to interest them; the whole problem of profit-sharing is not a vital issue with them. Thank God, it has become a vital issue to many!

Instead of calling attention with the pessimist or anarchist to the condition that exists, let us remember how much has been done along this line; and is being done to-day. Hundreds and thousands of firms in this

country are now engaged increasingly in profit-sharing, and those who are doing the most along this line are advertising themselves the least in such activity. In consecrating thought to others employed by them they are overcoming possession and utilising their power to overcome this common peril.

Then there must be the *heart* control. We must give ourselves because we *love* the tasks which are before us. This is the spirit of modern benevolence. We can never love to give until we love those to whom we give, and the object for which we give. The rule of the Old Testament was that every man should give one-tenth of his income to the Lord. That legally belonged to the Lord, but there are those to-day who are disregarding this law of God and wondering why they should consider it. It is worthy of the consideration of all. A Christian man who does not give *at least* one-tenth of his income to the Lord's work directly in one form or another, is not fair with God! God honours those who thus honour Him. Some men would give vast sums if this were true. I remember an instance when preaching on this subject years ago, a man responded, "Why, if I gave one-tenth of my income to the Lord, I would give tens of thousands of dollars to Him every year." He spoke of it as an impossibility; still that man was practically robbing his own best nature by not doing so.

Irrespective of taxation or the modern problems of income, it is nevertheless true that one-tenth of all that one earns belongs to God and should be given to him and to His work. Not the mere meeting of incidental bills in the house of God, but going into partnership with the Almighty and giving because one's heart is

right before Him. If we love Him with all our hearts, this will not be an effort, and a legal amount of one-tenth of one's income will be vastly increased as we augment it and give of our abundance to the work of the Lord.

The Church of Jesus Christ has failed to realise through her individual membership the great responsibilities which are hers in preparing for the future; in making possible the work of the future by storing up the agencies of money and wisdom to meet the needs of the coming generation. The Church of Jesus Christ is a very central force, from which emanate the forces that work out the great benefits of city and nation. In the church originate the purpose and plans to ameliorate the sufferings of society; to relieve the oppressed; to save the sick and dying. Here start our great hospitals and those institutions which engender Christian training. Here start the great permanent philanthropies which bless society. This is the very centre from which have emanated the great organisations and societies which to-day stand for the betterment of mankind. The church is the dynamo which drives the wheels of philanthropic force all over the world. We must sustain the centre; we must subscribe liberally and freely to that which is the heart and head of the whole matter. Jesus Christ discovered for us this truth and made the Church which bears his name the fosterer of His great ideals and purposes. We may have kept the commandments, but this one thing we yet lack, and this is the giving of our goods to feed the poor, and possessing our goods instead of being possessed by them.

No wonder Prescott, the historian, asked when the body of the young miner was discovered at the bottom of the river with a belt of gold around him, "Did he possess his money, or did his money possess him?" Maltbie Davenport Babcock well wrote, "The only test of possession is use. A lost soul is one that God cannot use and one that cannot use God; trustless, prayerless, fruitless, loveless, is it not so far lost? Thus a man may be dead while he lives."

This man of our text went away sorrowful; we knew nothing of him or his future. Strong in personality and possession in life, he failed because he had great possessions which he did not use for God. Instead of vitalising his wealth, his wealth devitalised him.

There is a joy side to it all. It is not what we have which we ever retain. It is that which we give which lives with us forever, and the great Eternal Life is the life spent in the consciousness of life and possession given away. Thus we are to spend ourselves and spend that which we have, that others may be blessed and that the world may be saved.

XII

UNITY IN SERVICE

“The work is great and large and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.”

—NEHEMIAH 4:19.

The theme this morning is Christian Unity, or Unity in Service. “The work is great and large and we are separated.” There is no need to discuss the question of unity and its efficiency in the general service of life. God did not make, as is so commonly stated to-day, the *individual* the unit in society. He did make the individual the unit in the state in so far as government had been organised, but he did not make the individual the unit of society. He made *the family*, the home, the unit in social relationship; and where family right has disintegrated, where the vows of the marriage altar have been looked upon lightly, invariably society has disintegrated.

God made the home the unit of society, and He created a great common bond in human hearts, and a desire for that bond, which is manifested by all kinds of organisations and fraternities which emphasise the longing for brotherhood in human kind. There never has been an age, statisticians tell us, where this has gone to such an extreme as it has in our own generation. There are Brotherhoods everywhere—fraternal

units in society of all kinds and of all character; men who work in the same employment, men who have the same policies and methods, men who have the same principle in their ideals and purposes, and men of the same kith and kin. Then there are men who have been trained in the same centre of education, men from the same location or the same commonwealth. It is said that no city in our land has so many State organisations, simply social in character, as our own city. There is the New England Society, the Indiana Society, the Empire State Society, the Ohio Society, and many others, and recently many of the states of the West as well as the East have organised also.

We find this true not only socially, but politically; organisations exist within organisations. Not simply those societies which are known to the world, but perhaps even more difficult to deal with, and more dangerous at times, are the secret societies. We find that even religious organisations are not always in the open. The religious organisations which have done the greatest harm in the world have not been those which have been in the open, but organisations which have presented one thing to the public and have concealed their dominating motive from the public. This sort of organisation has been and always will be dangerous, until sincere democracy of government reaches the point when such subtlety will not only be frowned upon, but will be wiped out by the force of the public opinion of the great body politic. If that day does not come, democracy will prove a failure, and we do not believe that it will prove a failure.

We find everywhere that this social instinct, this

instinct of brotherhood and of co-operation, is related to the great principles of human life. Jesus Christ Himself inaugurated the religious associations of men and women which we see after all these years, and the people were taught to regard the organisation as of less importance than the great principle upon which it was founded. God had called the children of Israel a distinct people. The people were not so much a people because of their complete organisation as because of the great underlying principle for which they stood. Israel was not strong as a nation because of her wisdom or greatness. She oftentimes was unknown among the nations save for her distinctive characters, such men as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. In the hearts of these young men there was a fixed principle, and no command of king or government could take from them that great distinctive principle of righteousness. We find in Daniel's case that throughout the reigns of four kings he was master because of that principle. But when the Lord Jesus Christ organised that which has developed into the Christian Church of to-day, we find He started with a few men. He had a very small organisation, but it was related to Him. It was not because Peter loved Andrew, nor because John loved James. It was not because Matthew was peculiarly fond of Mark, John, Peter or Thomas. It was because these men had centred their affection and interest in the Individual Who had called them to follow Him. From that chosen few—that chosen company—the Church of Christ grew. I think it is unnecessary for us to emphasise further the necessity and value, and the expediency of unity. Back of any organisation or

co-operating agency there must be a great fixed purpose, and that fixed purpose must be related, not only to the individual, but to the principle which that individual represents. Or, if you leave the individual out, it is the incarnate principle which holds and sustains the strength of the organisation.

Our text this morning is related to a very interesting part of Israelitish history. Jerusalem was no longer flourishing. Artaxerxes, the great King of Persia, had control over a vast section of country and the entire land was tributary to him. Nehemiah was a man who had risen because of his wisdom and his efficiency. He was a man both of courage and purpose, and a man with courage and purpose is usually a man of efficiency and insight into the past and future. When Kipling wrote "Lest We Forget" he touched a chord not only in the British mind, but he touched a chord of responsibility in all minds as to the serious purposes and duties of life. The true student of our Lord Jesus Christ is a man who looks backward and looks forward, and who has individuality of purpose and concentration of aim; one who realises the blessings of the past and the power of the future.

This Nehemiah was a man of foresight and power. He planned the campaign carefully. He left to Divine Providence that which every man should leave to Divine Providence—those elements beyond the individual's control—instead of planning his entire course and then thinking that God should co-operate with that course, he sought divine guidance.

It is one thing to say in your prayer, "Oh, God, answer my prayer in helping me work my plan," and it

is quite another thing to pray, "Oh, God, teach me Thy will that I may plan according to Thy laws." Many a man prays, "Help me the way I want help," and if his prayer is not answered he believes that God does not answer prayer, while the whole spirit of Divine Truth suggests asking God for divine wisdom.

Nehemiah sought that wisdom. He was the king's cup-bearer. He went before the king. The king saw that he was saddened. He said, "My heart aches for Jerusalem. The walls are broken down, the gates are burned. There is no rejoicing in my city, the city of my fathers." The king was interested and gave Nehemiah what he asked for, a space of years as a furlough that he might go to his own land and work out his own enterprise. This man who had enriched himself with wisdom and elevated himself with faithful work was bold in faith and request. It was not the brazen boldness of the unworthy. It was that of the man who had a bold purpose because he had a high motive in his soul. This man with the high motive expressed to the king his desire, and the king sent him back to Jerusalem.

Now when he went back he found a great need of organisation, and perhaps one of the first things we need to recognise is that the great power of unity is in this same proper organisation. The Tribes of Israel were organised quickly. Study the map of the Holy Land, and you will see that this man worked with great unity of action, as well as a clear understanding of the people in his organisation. God chose leaders who knew how to organise. Nehemiah organised his people. Read the third chapter of this book and see how well they were organised. This book of thirteen

chapters is a book we all ought to read. How many of us really know very much about Nehemiah? The book is a classic. Just before the Old Testament loses itself in the four hundred years of silence, and about at the time Malachi wrote, this book of Nehemiah comes in.

You will find in the third chapter that in the renewing of every part of the wall, the twelve tribes and leaders in Israel were to do *every man his own work on his own part of the wall*. Further, there was not only the consciousness of the need of organisation, but a realisation that organisation was not enough. We need this truth to-day. A great many splendid organisations have utterly failed because they were *only* well-organised. This man knew that organisation was necessary, but he also knew that no organisation would carry itself without a great holy distinctive purpose back of that organisation.

Some of the most lifeless things to-day are the most highly organised, but the difficulty is they are *only* organised. Suppose a man came into your office when you were the financial agent for a great institution, and tried enthusiastically to interest you in certain investments from the standpoint of their organisation, representing to you that they were of the most perfect and complete organisation? Would you take this investment because he had a splendid organization? I rather think you would say something to him about security! I think you would say something to him about that which stood back of his organisation. You would never think of taking stock in any work simply on account of its organisation.

Now Nehemiah realised that there was something

more than organisation needed, so he showed them how to serve and work and guard against their enemies at the same time. There are those in the world who actually disregard the enemy. They say, "Simply go ahead and do your work and build your part of the wall and all will be well." But as long as there is human life and right effort there will also be enemies. There is no character-filled man who has not had them; no man of fidelity and force who will not have them, if his work amounts to anything. But why be afraid of them? Be bold, be wise. Stand out with organisation and face your enemy, but be stronger than he is, standing boldly and fearlessly for the principle and the work in which you believe. If your cause is right and just, and if you are Christian in spirit as well as in purpose (and that means much), you will find that your enemies will be relatively few, and you will find that those who are superficial in their opposition will disappear.

This man had enemies and he knew well enough that the people would fail unless organised to meet the enemy.

Now I am not here to controvert in any way, neither do I think the pulpit the place to discuss the questions of the day and hour which are not related to the great principles of spiritual life, but I want to say that there is one principle which is related to all the people, and related to the Church of Christ, and you and I must realise that God calls upon us to defend the weak and protect enterprises and principles which are His.

Just a single illustration of what I mean. One of the most extreme pacifists I have ever heard (and personally I believe that in all great questions there is a

golden mean that should be followed rather than the extreme position), a man who practically said that there could be no case where any individual or nation should *ever* retaliate or offer defence, but should always "turn the other cheek," stepped out from giving an address of that sort and administered the most severe rebuke in anger to one who had overlooked a slight matter of duty. I mention the incident by way of illustration, for it is not fair to make use of an incident as argument. The man who did it utterly disregarded and misunderstood the principle, and was entirely unconscious of it.

What our Lord Jesus Christ said about "turning the other cheek" referred to the individual attitude of the man in his own heart toward a brother man. It did not refer to the protection of the weak, nor to the disregard of those who are under our care.

Is there a parent in all this land who would allow his child to step out on to the streets of this great city of Chicago, and let that child suffer personal wrong at the hands of some wicked man, because he interpreted the New Testament as telling him that he should not protect against such a wrong? What is the child's father for? What is the state for?

Now mark you, as long as sin is in this world of ours and as long as sin rules in the life of man or nation, there will be warfare, for sin means warfare. In so far as righteousness protects itself and others, it stands for principle and stands for right, and in so far as it is God-born.

Do you suppose that you and I have any right to say that our heroic ancestors who died to protect the great

principle that "taxation without representation" was wrong, that God did not lead them, and that they were not righteous and just?

Let us be sane and sensible about this thing, and let us realise that peace can only exist where right exists. There is something worse than war, and that is sin, and as long as sin exists war will result. When this world is Christ-like, the world will be at peace, and not until then. When sin rules in the lives of men, sin will fight against right, and the way to defend against war is to slay sin.

Men and women, let us put this correctly before us. We stand to-day for Him. Let us make our organisation strong in service and living works. Let us realise that as we build the walls of Jerusalem, our swords are to be at our sides, with one hand to build and construct, and with the other hand to guard and keep that which is sacred and right, and God's sword is the "Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Men will fight against it. They always have and they always will. Let us remember that Nehemiah, in his co-operative leadership, was a man who thrilled these people with the thought of protective service for the sake of constructive enterprise. Never warfare for the sake of warfare, but the walls of Jerusalem must be built. The timbers that come from the mountains, from the great trees which have grown year by year until their splendid trunks reach up towards the starry heavens, must be made fit for the purpose. They must be squared and hewn into form for the great doors and gates that are to make the walls of Jerusalem secure.

But mark you, those gates could not be put together

and the walls reconstructed without opposition. There were others without, ready to break down those gates and prevent the children of Israel from carrying on the reconstruction. There are always enemies.

Can we say that in a city like ours there is no sin; no place for contention and warfare, when over twelve million dollars in a single year came into the treasury of wicked men and women because of commercialised vice? When the sin of this city can so protect and surround itself that men are forced to admit such facts; when statistics are taken we realize great wrongs that menace the lives of our boys and girls, our sons and daughters, because men are willing to ruin their lives, have we not the duty to fight? Is there not a time when these men become the enemies of God and when, as Nehemiah did, we must labor with our hands and work with the sword at our side? You call it the work of police. Well, call it what you may, it means opposition.

You will notice another great characteristic of this scheme of co-operation, namely, that the one who sounded the bugle stood by his side and was with Nehemiah. "We are separated and the work is large." They had to be separated, but when they heard the sound of the trumpet they came nigh and *worked together*.

There is a great truth here which we must not overlook. The Church is a union for worship in the house of Almighty God. Sometimes men, in the heat of discussion or the carelessness of self-excuse, say, "What is the use of attending divine worship?" What is the use? Suppose the children of your home grew up

without church attendance and church interest? Suppose your children see no interest on your part? Suppose they become imbued with the idea, as some say, that "Sunday is a day for rest and recreation," and suppose you absent yourself regularly from the House of God, and let any pleasure, no matter how trivial, separate you from attendance at divine worship? You can stand it, you say. You may have had an early training which you have disregarded. But what about your children? Let thirty years go by, and think of sixty years, and your children's children. What about the grandchildren? What religious principles will they have within their souls? I think of the father who stood before his pastor and said, "I have never been interested in those things." Sometimes he says: "As a child I had too much of it." I don't believe that. I would not have that which is mine to-day, if it had not been for the faithfulness and guardianship which led and kept me where I ought to be when *I did not want to be* where I was. What of your children's children who are facing, or will face, the serious problems of life, and the reality of divine things if they know nothing about assembling themselves together on God's day in God's house? There is a basic principle here.

Men are selfish and self-interested, and that is the curse to-day. It is not so much agnosticism or infidelity as it is selfishness.

How well I remember an old college professor who used to say, "Young men, when you spell sin s-i-n, you are wrong; you should spell sin s-e-l-f," and I think he was right. The sin of to-day is selfishness. You say, "I want to spend my time on the golf links,"

or "I want to spend my time as I choose." I am not condemning the golf links; I am not condemning your own wishes. You can walk with your children on Sunday, as on any other day, and would to God more fathers took the time to do that, instead of doing other things, but, what I want to say is, that the great principle at stake is that of your allowing yourselves to do the things which take you from the House of God, and from the worship of God's Holy Name on His day, and the influence of this upon your children.

What are your grandchildren going to do if they know nothing of these things from their parents? It is not so much what men do, but what God does *in men*, when they assemble themselves together to honour and worship Him. We face it all in one sentence. Are we building the walls of Jerusalem? "The work is great, and we are separated."

XIII

THE HUMILITY OF THE SOUL

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

—LUKE 18:14.

Our text is in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, the fourteenth verse:

"For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

One of the most remarkable sentences which St. Augustine ever used touches the very centre of our thought this morning: The Humility of the Soul. St. Augustine said: "The sufficiency of my merit is to know that my merit is not sufficient." It touches directly the thought before us: The Humility of the Soul, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Now there is a very marked false humility which is seen in humanity at times. The human element of thought is such that when it centres upon itself it becomes extremely introspective, and oftentimes destroys its own purpose. There is a humility which utterly fails to be humble because it is self-conscious and becomes self-advertised. It is abhorrent when we see it in the vivid picturing of Charles Dickens who paints for us the despicable character of Uriah Heep, an extreme of this type. He wishes to impress his characters and what they represent upon the mind, and that

is why they are so extreme. That is why they are Dickens' characters. They were meant to be extreme.

That very character, despicable as he is, is an emphasis, an underscoring of the very thing which we would use in preface this morning. Do not mistake for humility that which pretends to be humility, for it then and there ceases to be humility. Do not practise excessive humility. One of our simplest writers of olden time was John Todd. Those who read John Todd were sensible, even if they were extreme; and even if sometimes they leaned backwards in their righteousness, when they stooped they stooped in true humility. With his blunt frankness—which, as some have said, was useful even in his day—John Todd said, as he shook his very fist in the faces of men who pretended to be religious: "Do not practice excessive humility. If you do, you will destroy your power to be humble."

We do not this morning wish to interpret the words of our Saviour in words of professionalism. They cease to be real when they are lowered to a mere professionalism. On the other hand, there is a danger of allowing professionalism, in our fear lest it become self-advertised, to rob us of the genuine expression of our own manly selves and the showing of our real selves. There are people who err in this very interpretation of a great and serious truth. They fail to gain the blessing of a life of true humility because they are afraid that other people will think that they are aiming to be humble. They fail to gain the blessing of a spiritual life because they constantly fear that people will think they are hypocrites in aiming to show as their own that which they do not actually possess.

And just here we ought to realise that we err just as much if we fail to give expression to that which we really are, as if we pretend to be that which we really are not. In other words, if we are not true to our best selves, we fail to give genuine and true expression to that which we really are. Again if we fear that some people will think that we are trying to be that which we really are not, we err just as much as though we pretend to have that which we actually do not possess. There is that in the human heart which causes man to err in his fear of over-professionalism, so that he does not give himself heartily to that which he really endorses and that which he really believes.

The genuine humble life is the life that exercises humility without defining its terms, without advertising itself, without saying: "I am humbler than thou"; without saying (in religious phraseology) either in look or in word: "I am holier than thou." Holy people do not have to be self-advertised, and holy people who advertise themselves as holy cease to be holy. The life that is real; the life that rings with sincerity; the life that is known by that which it really is—such a life is understood by the age in which it lives as true and humble.

And still, why should we not wear the uniform that identifies the spiritual nature? True, the uniform is not always necessary. In citizens' clothes soldiers may live and work when not engaged in the strife of arms, but in the day of struggle the uniform is there! The uniform is worn at its proper and right time. But there is that which stamps the individual no matter what his cloak or what his clothing may be, even in

time of freedom from warfare. He may not be able to stand as erect as he stood upon the battlefield or upon the drill-room floor. He may be lowered in illness; he may be crippled by accident; he may be overcome by physical limitation, but people turn to him and speak to him in his official rank with honour and with pride, not because he is crippled and out of form, but because his real self is the leader, is the captain, is the general! He is known by what he is and what he has been, and his life has stood the test in time of demand.

You and I may be subject to conditions which are entirely separate from the ordinary forms of religious worship. There are tens of thousands of youth to-day who cannot go inside of a church, whose hearts are there. There are hundreds of thousands of men and women whose very churches have been destroyed, and who, if they worship God, are worshipping God under the great canopy of heaven, and in that sanctuary which is the great outdoors, but their hearts are crying out to God and their hearts are worshipping. War has robbed them of the outward sanctuary.

How different such a life and such a purpose from the life of the one who in the happiness and blessing of Christian surroundings is entirely neglectful of his privilege and opportunity! He walks by a score of churches, perchance, in a month's time without thinking of God, without knowing anything in his soul of the worship of God.

Now it is not our purpose this morning to compare the uneventful life of the unbeliever with the eventful life of the believer. More and more the uneventful life of the unbeliever grows into a mere commonplace which

soon disintegrates into a nebulous condition in which the human heart has no power to reinstate itself in vital religious thinking. The sad state of the non-religious mind is, that instead of becoming like the great systems of the starry heavens, more and more transforming their nebulous condition into a perfect centre and system he grows more chaotic in his thinking and opinions. The mind that is unassociated with God, the uneventful life of the unbeliever, becomes more and more nebulous, until at last the man in his sixties or seventies, or sometimes before that, says: "There is nothing in spiritual interpretations for me. I have no pleasure in them."

It is not our desire to trace this morning the development from or to the great heart of God, as revealed in Christ, but simply to allude to it, to show that the humble mind is the mind that first of all has the power to know God.

The man who is really ignorant is the man who feels himself so sufficiently intelligent that he does not need mental training. You find him everywhere. "I do not need to think or study. I know what I know. I understand the associations of life." In the commercial world he ceases to be a force.

Take for instance a man who is compelled, because of the need of the great energies of leadership, to resort to times of privacy in his own business or professional life, to shield his hours of thought or study. He must be accessible at the right time, and save himself for administrative power instead of mere executive power. He realises that a man ceases to be a force in the community when he is not producing new

thought as the result of his own enterprise of thought and his own personal product in mental leadership. And you will find before great groups, whether financial bodies, economic associations, national committees, or bodies engaged in handling international issues, that the man who is constantly producing as the result of his own mental training and power is essential to leadership! He ceases to be a power when he lives upon his reputation. He must constantly be doing the necessary thing in a constructive way. The greater his mental power, the more he will exercise power.

Now that man's power is not simply in his ability to produce, but in the consciousness that his experience and ability have led him to the place where he knows the necessity of clear understanding. He thinks more constructively and consecutively into the things which *are to be done*. Hence he is a man of intelligent force. Not so the commonplace makeshift, leading a life that goes around in a little circle. He will say: "What is the use of studying? I know it all. I have learned it. I understand it. Do I not influence my clerks and lead others?" Yes, but he has gone as high as he ever will go, and he probably will begin to go lower, for there is no standing still. He must either go higher or lower.

It takes the man who sees the insufficiency of his knowledge, who recognises his inability and his limitations, and endeavours to increase his knowledge and his ability. Go back to the sentence of St. Augustine, "The sufficiency of my merit is to know that my merit is not sufficient." Hence a man is really a scholar and a student (and there is a difference in the words), if he recognises increasingly the insufficiency of his own

merit and desires to acquire greater merit, and works to give the influence of that merit to others.

The same thing is true of righteousness. When you think you are righteous, you are not righteous. When we think we have been acquiring in righteousness when we have not, we begin to recognise the fact that we are retrograding instead of advancing.

Do I then always bow in humility before every fellow-man and say I am nothing? Do I go back to the phraseology of the old time hymnology and sing that I am a worm and worthless and grovelling on the earth? Not at all. That was a genuine expression, but it was a misconception. We do not desire to criticise it in an unwholesome or unkindly spirit. It grew out of a condition of thought that existed.

God does not desire us to grovel on the earth and crawl before men as those who were worms, and say: "There is no chance for us because sin has depleted our lives and ruined our possibilities and we have no place nor home."

Sin has been and is in every life; sin has been and is in every nation, and sin is the great vital reality that saps the life blood, that eats away the vitals of life. Such is sin. But sin is to be faced by manly courage, and sin is to be faced by an open frankness, and that force is the cross of Christ, and that frankness is the message of the One who lived and said: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Peter drew his sword and smote off the ear of the one who would take the Saviour captive, but Christ said: "Put up the sword into the sheath." But this same Saviour who would not use nor permit to be

used this physical means for saving Him from being taken captive, had the physical courage as well as the moral courage, to let them nail His hands and feet to the cross; to let them press that crown of thorns down upon His head until the blood dropped down upon his face, and He it was Who suffered the agony of the cross.

Sin is to be faced by the great moral standard which is born of the Saviour who says: "Humble thyself before God."

Now we must briefly sum up this truth in an emphasis which may mean eternal life to us all. Moments come and go quickly. A few hours, a few days, a few weeks, a few years, and we will be in the great hereafter of life. The hereafter-life means for us eternity. Immortality is born in us. We are born into great truths suddenly; we develop those great truths as the years progress. They have their infinite development in what Christ calls Eternity. Such is the immortality of the soul.

What then is this great truth that is ours, which we must grasp at this time? That great preacher, Flavel, said: "They that know God will be humble; they that know themselves cannot be proud." "I believe," said Ruskin, "that the first test of a truly great man is his humility." In that one sentence: "They that know God will be humble; they that know themselves cannot be proud—" there is the relationship of your own heart to God; the relationship of your life to your fellowmen—humility toward God, serving God in serving humanity. The great truth growing out of this

may be ours to-day. It is this: "Man believeth unto righteousness with the heart," and serve with the life.

Three weeks ago Sunday evening we took up this subject and it came with newness of life and force to us all. It is our concluding thought this morning: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Such is the expression of the humble life. The life that believes has love at its centre, and that love dominates day by day. Are you too proud to admit it? Be careful! Mental pride has kept many a man from heart-power. You say with the sophists of old who with their logic and keenness of intellect paved the way for the philosophers of their time, and for the philosophies of modern philosophers—"Let me, with intellect and thought mark out the way which will lead to the only true course of life which I can follow intelligently." But remember that the great God says: "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness."

Show me the book of etiquette that can show men and women how to fall in love; that can show men and women whom to choose as the personalities with whom they would link their lives throughout this life; a standard of selection which will make "The Cotter's Saturday Night" possible. Show me any text book of mental science that can give to you and to me that training of the mind that will make a father so close to a son as to lead that son from wayward paths by intellectual force and power. Show me a single standard of logic or rhetoric which trains this human mind of ours, not only to know sin, but to overcome sin because of its knowledge of sin. Some of the most intellectual

nations of the world have been lost in the oblivion of wickedness, and oblivion and wickedness go together. The nation that could create most remarkable art, the nation that gave standardisation of force as no other nation, that built the great highways which are great arteries of transportation in Europe even to this day, those nations with art and force went down in moral decay to such an extent that your child and mine, in many an instance, must use expurgated editions of their literature.

Knowledge sufficient! No, knowledge was not sufficient, because knowledge standardised merely on the basis of logical and rational interpretation was not related to the great divine meaning of life and righteousness.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” And, my friends, there is a relation here. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Did we not read this morning that except as we become as little children we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven? Do you believe it? The world says to-day exactly the same as it said in Christ’s day: “Push the children away. This is a man’s day, and a woman’s day. This is the time and opportunity for adult minds and adult reasoning to solve life’s problems.” But the Saviour said: “Suffer the little children to come unto me.” Oh, can you see that picture now, when the dear Saviour of mankind puts His hand upon the head of a little child and looks into the face of that little six-year-old! Ah, there is love and there is response there! And the Saviour said: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”

My friends, if we want to know God, we must *believe with our hearts*. We must become as little children. Stop in the pride of your intellect which says: "Solve for me every problem before I admit Christ as my Saviour," and repeat: "Except ye be converted," and change the pride of your life to that of true humility or you cannot know God. But if we will stand with those little children and look into the face of the Saviour, we, too, will find our place and our opportunity. We will admit and confess the Saviour, not by an intellectual standard, but by consecrating our intellectuality and our minds and our hearts to the Saviour of men. We will know the humility of the Kingdom of God. And the prophesy of the hour will be, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

XIV

THE CONVICTION OF SIN

“And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on Me.”—JOHN 16:8, 9.

There has always been in the world a difference of view as to the meaning of sin, the consequence of sin, and the tremendous importance of sin. There can be no vital religion without a belief in and a consciousness of the immensity of sin. There may be a philosophy of religion; there never can be a religion. Sin, the great controlling force of the human heart, must be realised, for sin's need brought a Saviour into the world.

The standard of our Christian faith is not based upon the conception of an ideal, but on the reality of a great fact. It is not the Christmas Season heralded by the Christmas bell and the birth of our Saviour, but the solemn consciousness of the Cross;

“There was a green hill far away,
Without the city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.”

This is the great central truth of the religion of Jesus Christ. Without it men cannot claim His Deity; without it, He was simply a beautiful life in a world that needed an example.

The Christian's faith then centres around the Cross. The Cross has no meaning without the need of it. Men do not die voluntarily because they love to die. Jesus of Nazareth who saved others, and to whom that great slur was uttered, "Himself He cannot save!" did not die to be a great picture in history, nor to be the great catastrophe of the ages—not at all. He died to save men *from their sins*. "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." He was heralded with those great words—"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The central truth of the Christian faith, irrespective of creed, irrespective of what we term denomination, is that figure of the Cross on which the Saviour of men died.

The need of salvation brings us to the consciousness of sin; the realisation of His place.

The age is suffering from the lack of strong truth. Do you think it is an easy religion that you want? Do you think it is a complacent satisfaction of the soul that rests you when you put your head upon the pillow at night, and comforts without a struggle against the forces of wrong? The religion of Jesus Christ has never been a complacent religion. It has never been a compromising religion, saying, "Never mind if you do this, or never mind if you do that; it is all right, the Lord is merciful; His name is Love, nothing else." No! No! The religion which is a human-made interpretation will starve as it seeks to nourish itself.

The religion of Jesus Christ is strong and vital and sure. It means contest; it means a victory which never

is gained save as a soul struggles to attain. It puts that iron into the blood which makes strength; it gives grey-matter to the brain; it gives to the soul that great strength which comes in the consciousness that it has conquered.

But sin, after all, seems very victorious in our day as it has in all generations. You ask what is the sin that will always separate me from God? I do not know, save as the Scripture makes it evident that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost. The investigation of it has driven more men and women to crazed minds than any other religious truth, but it is evident in Scripture that the sin that you and I must fear is the sin of unbelief. Remember the text—"And when He is come, He will *convict* the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (of sin), *because they believe not on Me.*"

But you cannot arbitrarily force a man to believe. No, of course you cannot. But suppose you have not given your own soul the opportunity of belief. Suppose you have deceived your own inclination by saying, I will fight against the thing which I cannot argue through, and the conclusion which I cannot fully understand. There never has been an invention worth its name that was not filled with doubt, unbelief and disbelief. In life we search and investigate and experiment. Have we any idea of experimental religion in our faith?

There is not a great saving truth in the medical world to-day that has not been the result of careful and searching investigation. Sometimes by a mere accident men have fallen upon a circumstance or condition which

has helped reveal a truth, and belief has carried it through.

Belief, confidence, is not the result of astounding facts presented to the world, but the result of experience—experimenting and believing have resulted.

Have you given your conscience a chance? The sadness of all this in our age is that so many people do not care. So many youths, trained splendidly in intellect, backed by the inheritance of godly generations, are totally indifferent to this whole question. They laugh (they do not sneer) in the listlessness of the moment and say, "What's the use?" for their real interest is in the things of the hour, of the day; the opportunities of life instead of the purposes of life; the pleasures of life instead of the responsibilities of life. And if we are older, we excuse them by saying, "they are young; they will come to the experience in time." Yes, but what if they are wrong? The strong blows and forces of life have always been prefaced by the strength of youth.

Our last war was a war of young men, and they were boys who took up their weapons and marched beside their comrades. They had their moments of carelessness; they showed that they were filled with life and promise, but oh, in those hearts and lives there was something deeper than the mere thrill of the moment; something greater than the ambition of the hour; than the inspiration of the day! Yet, it was there! It is there in a latent state now. The men and women who came to these shores two hundred or three hundred years ago did not come to make a commercial nation; they did not come in order that they might have places

where they could trade freely. Those men and women came to these shores because they said, "The greatest thing in all this world is to have a conscience, and to live up to it! And any nation that deprives us of the worship of Almighty God as our consciences dictate, cannot hold our loyalty." Virginia, the Carolinas, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, New York, all through—from Holland, Scotland, England, or Ireland, they came with that purpose of worshipping God and keeping their consciences clear and strong, for they had faith and believed.

The inheritance of our land and of every Christian nation worthy of the name is conviction; they believed, and if they made a law, they kept that law, and if that law was wrong, they changed that law, but they did not break it.

I am not here to say (save by way of illustration) what your attitude may be towards the Eighteenth Amendment, but I do want to say: if you are willing to break the Eighteenth Amendment because you do not believe in it, you are not a true citizen of the United States. Change it, if it is your conviction, and if the majority have that conviction (I do not believe they have), but do not *break* it, and the man who breaks avowedly is disloyal to his nation. He is breaking a law which his nation has made.

In the city of New York, within the past few weeks, a man arose at a banquet where liquor was served. He was known to be a man of the world, but a man of intrinsic worth. He had not been an abstainer, he was a man of large influence. When the liquor was passed, that man said, "Not one drop. You men know

that I drink moderately, but our nation has stamped its name upon a law, and you know as well as I know that the cause of this action was largely economic rather than religious" (and that is true; we must be fair). "You know that this country has made a law, and I shall not break it," and he turned his glass down.

He was right, and if you purchase drink—I care not what your name may be—you are wrong. Change the law, if you will, but *do not break the law*, and do not laugh at a great nation that is based upon a majority rule. You say representatives passed this law, but who are the representatives, if they do not represent the people? The fair vote of the people passed it.

This is only an illustration, but I want to vitalise something in language which some of you will understand.

The power of law is in the keeping of law.

Now, unbelief in a thing may be the most dangerous foe of truth. Democracy has not yet sufficiently proved itself to say that it is the best government of the world. You say, "Do not be unpatriotic." I do not intend to be, but Democracy has not been living long enough yet to prove to the world that it is God's ultimate ideal of government. I believe it will, and you believe it will, but there are the rocks; there is the great hissing shoal that has wrecked many a nation. If Democracy is not loyal to law, Democracy cannot live, and if law does not govern great cities, Democracy is doomed, because the age in which we live is the age of great cities. I believe as you do that God honours and will honour our representative form of government, but it depends upon this question—are we willing to keep law? Do we

believe that sin is justified? The same great truth applies to government which must be applied to the soul.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “Be sure your sin will find you out.” The great sure fact of the conviction of sin must begin with the individual in his own soul, and must go through him to government.

I do not often refer to a novel, but if you have not read “The Master of Man” by Hall Caine, read it. It is a novel which will go down in history in my private judgment. It has been published in eight languages now; it will probably be published in more. It goes to the very root of the thing we are talking about this morning. It is the story of the conviction of sin in a soul, whose splendid victory over surroundings and self is revealed that the hero may live with a clear conscience.

Victor Stowell always will stand out in the history of fiction and Fenella Stanley will always be a character in the ideal of womanhood, and why? Because that man and that woman saw that nothing was worth while so much as that clear conscience that could look the soul in the eye. It was the power of the *conviction of sin*.

Now, men and women, we as Christian people to-day are overlooking some of the great primaries and considering the secondaries. If your body is not well and strong and developing vigorously, your mind cannot do its best work; your heart cannot act with all the free course it should. We may overcome these conditions, but the body of our religious thinking to-day is ill in a great many instances, and we are substituting the delicacies and niceties for the actual food which gives the

red blood to the veins and muscles, and strength and acuteness to the brain. We are making secondary things primary and we are relegating primary things to the rear.

What is your attitude to God? Are you a sinner, or not? Do you need forgiveness, or not? Has the Cross of Christ come into your life? Are you a forgiven child of God because you are a saved sinner?

Listen then to such words as these: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." You will never be judged on the same basis as the black man in Central Africa who has never heard the Gospel message. God will deal with him, but unto us "who hold the truth in unrighteousness," the wrath of heaven is revealed.

The great saints of God stopped not at the promises of God through unbelief, but were strong in the faith.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious."

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

"And straightway the father" of that poor child who had gone out in sickness and death, cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

The vast old world of which we are so vital a part is suffering just now; suffering with perplexity more than with pain. The pain was felt a few years ago. It is suffering with an anguish of soul rather than a great

pain of body; suffering with anxiety and doubt. What does she need?

Yes, the answer is heard in the rising young nation of Czecho Slovakia; in the strange outcry from Hungary; in the confusion of Poland; in the chaos of Russia; in the lack of credit in Germany; in the helplessness of the Near East; in the perplexing labour problems of England and we may add America—what does the old world need?

Oh, men and women, it needs a sense of the conviction of sin and of a return to God, and sin can never be felt in the multitude, but in the individual heart.

When those forefathers came to New York and to Connecticut and to Maryland and to the other colonies in this country, what did they come for? They came that as *individuals* they might face the problems of their religious life. Rome and often the established Church said, "No, if you are baptized; if you are received by us; if you go through the form, it is enough—leave it to the State, for the State and the Church are one." No, not at all! It was the Presbyterians who fought this through, shoulder to shoulder, with our Congregational friends, and with the Baptists, and The Friends and others. Then it was that great strong men stood out and said, "No, we believe that the individual soul must answer for itself. No king, nor sovereign; no state nor national church can say what I must do, but as a soul before God I am under the conviction of sin, personally. I must bow before my God and gain the power of my own life.

The government of United States was based upon that policy. We have not a sovereign nation. We

have a nation whose constitution believes in the individual conscience, and the responsibility of every citizen, and as we are loyal to our nation's principles and truth, let us be loyal to our God.

My brother, are you a sinner or not? If you are a sinner you need forgiveness, and there is only one way: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

For the sake of Christ; for the sake of this old world, and for the sake of your own soul, I plead with you to respond to the conviction of your sin, and seek the Saviour of mankind,

XV

FAITH REWARDED

“Then touched He their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith be it unto you.’”—MATTHEW 9:29.

Our subject this morning is “Faith and Its Reward.” The illustration of the two blind men restored to sight is a clear illustration of faith rewarded. “According to your faith be it unto you.” It was so with the ruler, the account of which is narrated in the same chapter which we read this morning. He said, “My daughter is now dead, but lay thy hand upon her and she shall live.” It was also true of the woman who touched Him in the throng, whose ailment had gone on through the years. Christ said, “Thy Faith hath saved thee.”

The profession of faith is not so much needed as the possession of faith, and the possession of faith leads to the true profession of faith. It is not a hope, but a belief.

“Just as I am! Thou wilt receive.
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe.”

Faith is not a something unseen and unknown; an incoherent, unpossessable will-o-the-wisp, but an active actual power. Faith is a possession, faith is that which we seek and that which we attain. “According to your faith be it unto you.”

“Abraham *believed* God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.” “All things are possible to him that *believeth*.” “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee *because* he *trusteth* in Thee.”

Let us first consider then that faith does not exclude the use of means, but it does not stop with them. The rulers sought Christ; the woman touched Christ; the blind men went into the house following Christ after they had made their plea. It was literally true, “According to your faith be it unto you.” “Believest thou that I can do this?” And the answer was that they believed.

Means were utilised; they accepted faith; this was the trail which pointed the entrance into God’s great unknown forest of reserve. Faith went over that trail, but there was a trail; there was a place to go; there was a way to walk. There is a great danger in disregarding this trail. Christ said, “I am the door; By me if any man enter in.” Christ also said, “Come unto me.” The effort must be made.

Means were emphasised, and the disregard of means in the exercise of faith is dangerous. The Lord “made spittle and anointed the eyes” of another who was blind; the Lord “touched the eyes”; God gave Moses a rod with which to exercise his command. The best of medical skill should be accompanied by faith. It is unscriptural to disregard the means which God has provided, and instead of lessening faith, they increase faith.

We are in great danger in much of our religious interpretation, as well as in much of the philosophic

teaching called religion to-day, in disregarding this sure fact.

It is time that the pulpit of the Lord Jesus Christ, without fear and without compromises, spoke forth the great words of Divine Truth in all this question of Divine Healing, for there is much that is called religion, and much within the Church that is called religious that is unscriptural.

The "anointing with oil" was not simply a known matter of faith, for oil was about the only means known in the days of Christ which physicians used for cleansing qualities, and there was a material benefit in that anointing of oil, outside and inside. It was the best means that was known. The disregard of the best that God has given is unscriptural and fails in the great standard of Divine Truth, which Jesus Christ, Himself, exercised and which He taught.

The disregard of means when provided is not only unscriptural, but is presumptuous, and leads to fanatical error. It is as foolish as an attempted aeroplane without an engine.

Theodore Cuyler used to say: "God does not give us ready money; he issues promissory notes and then pays them when faith presents them at the throne. Each one of us is given a check book."

The faith in Samson was not a disregard of means. His eyes had been put out—true; his strength had been taken from him, for he had broken God's law, and many a life in the breaking of God's law has lost its power of faith, and fails to realise what is the cause. But, there is a chance; there is a power to turn back—a regaining influence. So, we can see Samson, blinded

as he was—the great strength of his body standing out as he bent beneath the task that was his; as he strained his muscles and stretched himself to that task, and leaned between those great pillars until they yielded, and the great roof fell, and the sinful were crushed as they fell in the debris. He exercised the supreme effort of his life as he relied upon his God. He ran to the contest like David the shepherd lad.

You can see this all through God's teaching. Did David select those five little stones for the sling and simply rely upon his own strength? No, he ran to Goliath. Constantly the servants of God are exercising their every effort. Why could not David have slain the giant without a sling and the stones? Why not say, "My God can defeat that giant." No, this skillful youth, this shepherd lad, selected these stones and *ran* to the contest, saying, "Jehovah is greater than this false champion of the Philistines."

Let us then understand clearly the power and confidence which is revealed in the use of means and understanding it, let us live accordingly.

Second: Let us understand that the *Assurance* of faith must be ours, if faith is to be rewarded. I love to go back to the Old Testament—sometimes we infer that we do not depend upon the wise sayings of the sages of God who have spoken in the olden days. Well, select your man. Who shall he be? Solomon, you say—wiser than any human genius. Far more so in his remarkable sayings than Plato or Aristotle, and inspired of God. We will go back to the book of Proverbs. In the first chapter we read: "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet

from fear of evil." How is this for assurance? And in the fourteenth chapter, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence and His children shall have a place of refuge."

Take a man with the philosophic bent and the spiritual insight of St. Paul. He said, "Your faith shall not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." Take those words in Hebrews—"Who *through faith* subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

This same Paul said, "I know Whom I have believed." Go back to old Job, and he says: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The contamination of fleshy conditions, the dire punishment which the world said had come upon him because of his sin (and which he knew was not true) did not take from him *his assurance*.

Christ said, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." "According to your faith, be it unto you."

This confidence and assurance will relate itself to prayer. We will believe and possess, *because* we believe. There is no presumption in it. "If we ask anything in His Name He heareth us."

John Flavel, the old saint, said: "There are three acts of faith: assent, acceptance, assurance, and the assurance grows out of the other two."

Third: Faith means living the seen life in the unseen God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath

it entered the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." This is not only a promise of heaven, but it is a possession of earth. It is beautiful to quote that verse for the future, and it is of great comfort and help at times of sorrow, but it was not originally intended for funeral services. It is a *present possession*. "Eye *hath* not seen, neither *hath* it entered the heart of man . . . the things which God *hath* prepared for us." The possessions of the unseen God, through faith, become the reality of the seeing man upon earth. It does not in any way lessen the glory and beauty of the future, but it enhances the present.

We are living in a day when a great deal is said as to religion and its influences upon the present day problems. Some feel this is unscriptural, but they are misguided. You often hear these words: "My citizenship is in heaven," but that does not give you authority to think that you are not to vote right, and to have your share of helpfulness in the world in which we live.

The religion of Jesus Christ does not go with poor sanitation, nor with a disregard of the great moral law. The strongest human lives in their relationship to Christ are those who exercise the forces and the power of the present in their confidence and belief, and who in the Unseen God have faith to make the seen world better.

There has at times been a controversy, a wrong controversy and unwarranted controversy, between the elements of moral reform, social betterment and spiritual leadership. There should be the closest sympathy. The Church, whether so exercising her au-

thority by name or not, should be in the very midst of every enterprise for the betterment of mankind, for the correction of wrong, the enforcement of law! Thank God as we look through the great catalog of philanthropic institutions and institutions of moral reform, we find that the men and leaders of the Church of Christ have been connected from the beginning with these works.

It is not strange that we to-day find error oftentimes encasing and surrounding itself by that interpretation of life that closes its eyes to the present and sees only the future, but it is unscriptural. It is religious bigotry of the worst form; it is the "holier than thou" standard.

The power of the Unseen exercises itself in the seen, and the great dangers of life are overcome because of this Unseen but living faith.

Again we ought to realize that faith accepts God's promises and thus becomes practical conviction.

James Freeman Clark said, "All the strength and force of man comes from his faith in things unseen, which means conviction." He went on to say that "it precedes great action. Clear, deep, living convictions rule the world."

God's promises are not to be side-tracked and unbelieved, but because God speaks we are to believe Him and to live those promises in that living faith which responds with power to His will and work.

Napoleon, when reviewing his troops in Paris, was riding his splendid steed, when his bridle fell from his hand, and the horse, a great fiery beast, uncontrolled save with his touch, leaped away. Before Napoleon could get that bridle a soldier from the ranks darted

out and seizing the bridle placed it in Napoleon's hand. Napoleon said, "Thank you, captain," and immediately the man responded: "Of what regiment, sire?" Napoleon answered, "Of my guard." He left his gun and went to the officers' headquarters. They said to him: "What means this undisciplined fellow? Why are you here among these officers?" He said, "Because I am a captain, sir." The officer said, "Captain," and sneered at him. "Of what regiment?" "Of his guard," the soldier replied pointing to Napoleon who was passing. "Who said so?" asked an officer. "He did, General," was the reply. The General responded, "Pardon me, sir; we honour you in your position."

"The captain of his guard!" Why Napoleon had said it, and the private soldier believed it and took him at his word. And you and I, before the King of kings, and before the promises of the Almighty God wither and tremble with fear when God says, "Believe, accept," and the strength of God's power is in *the recognition of that response*.

The realisation and possession of such faith can change the influence of Christ throughout the world.

Dr. Parkhurst used to say, "Faith is the heroism of the intellect." Ruskin said, "The proper power of faith is to trust without evidence, not with evidence," and you and I are trying to make faith something that it is not. We say, "Yes, show me the evidence." Why, that is not faith. Faith is to trust *without that evidence* in the confidence and belief of the living God.

I love those words we quoted in prayer this morning from Tennyson:

“Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.”

There is a wonderful power and influence in this exercise of faith. God Himself says He will make strength out of weakness, and that the use of power which we have will respond constantly, even as God Himself provides. There is an old proverb which says, “Weave in faith and God will find the thread.”

Our own Whittier was more than inspired by human thought when he said:

“I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.”

It was the exercise of a great faith in a day when the nation was in turmoil, and when the thoughts of men were filled with strife and confusion that this man's faith was exercised in such thoughts.

I love that story of Wesley when, as a youth, he was convinced of the Lutheran Doctrine and interpretation of Justification by Faith. He said, “I cannot preach any more. It is too powerful.” He went to a young Moravian Missionary, and said, “I cannot preach believing that truth.” The Missionary said, “Yes, preach.” Wesley said, “What shall I preach?” The Moravian said, “Preach faith until you have it, then preach faith *because* you have it.” That was what Wesley did and it resulted in his great influence.

Paul did not say, “I do not know whom I have

believed, but I know what he wants me to do." No. He said, "I *know whom* I have believed," and then "What wilt *Thou* have me to do."

Believe! Oh, but you say there are so many doubts and difficulties. Of course there are, and always will be. But the Saviour heeded the prayer, "Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

And to-day when the varied conditions of human life seem in the very balance, men are challenged, not as to their deeds alone, but as to their faith. Men of courage, men of confidence, men of hope, men of life! Believe, and as the convictions of a great faith thrill your life, the mists will be backed up by the sun! There will be a rift in the cloud until all is clear, and living in the splendid life of confidence and belief, you will say, "My Lord and My God!"

XVI

GOD-GIVEN PERSONALITY

“And man became a living soul.”—GENESIS 2:7.

Ours is a profound theme this morning. One feels almost like running from it. Not because its greatness is not recognised, but because a true student of the subject finds himself asking: “What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man that Thou visitest him?” He feels the utter inability of a human being to express the meaning of such a truth!

This is a very hot day. Many of us are strangers; many have come here to worship God without particular thought as to a particular theme, but may God grant that this theme this morning may grip our minds and mould our characters, irrespective of conditions or surroundings.

The text is found in Genesis 2:7. The 27th verse of the first chapter says: “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” . . . “and man became a living soul.”

When the great poet Tennyson was picturing one who, out of the depth of sorrow and perplexity and loss of years, must look into the past and face the future, he said of Enoch Arden:

“His resolve upbore him, and firm faith,
And prayer, from a living source
 Within the will,
And beating up through all this bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the deep,
Kept him a living soul.”

God made man a “living soul.” The beasts of the field, He created; all that makes up the species of nature everywhere, and over them all He put a dominating spirit, and that dominating spirit was man. There is a great deal of worthless talk to-day as to the origin of the human race. To me it does not seem worthy the discussion and prominence it is gaining. God’s Word says: “And man became a living soul.”

A great authority in the British Museum (and there is no greater) says there has never been the slightest scientific evidence which has revealed any connecting link between the animal kingdom and that which we call human.

Now, one other word—why discuss it? Why not accept the great unmakeable, unchangeable God-created? We do not read that God developed, but “in the beginning God *created*.” The Creator made man in His own image and endowed him with gifts which brute creation has never had and cannot attain.

The soul of man, then, is our theme, but more—“God-given personality,” that which is divine in human form.

In order that we may be clear, consider this illustration: Take a great group of ignorant people—those who have never had intellectual training in any form, who have lived as brutes. There is nothing that marks

the individual from the individual. They are almost alike, but when intelligence begins, faces begin to change, heads begin to change in form and the very brains of a man express themselves in his eyes. Again, look into a college graduating class. You see anywhere from five hundred or one thousand up in a class of one of our Universities, and as they go up to get their diplomas you notice the individuality of those graduates; the distinction of those faces; the difference in those personalities; and, the greater the intelligence, the more clearly outlined in the faces is the marked individuality. Look at a great crowd of ignorant, superstitious, careless people, and they almost seem as if they were the repetition of one man and seem alike. God made a distinct and definite personality of every one of us. I am speaking of the normal life, the healthful life. He gave to us a capability of developing that individual something which we call ourself. Our own souls are unique.

How far are we as individuals to give back to God the true development of that responsibility which He has placed upon us in filling our lives with Himself? He made our souls worthy of the God-like personality which He has given to us. Notice the twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him."

Now the record of the fall. Just why the Eternal Mind should have planned that the human being whom He had created should not eat of the tree of good and evil, and thus gain the knowledge thereof, we do not know, but that human characteristic was implanted somewhere so that the desire to do that

which was withheld stood out as sin. Sin was not in the inclination, but in the yielding. That human life yielded, and now the human life knows evil as well as good. God is there, but there is added the tendency to do wrong and evil. Now that tendency to do wrong developed into all that was low. That was the separating influence from God. Goodness was a part of Him. Then came the decline that departed from the eternal to the human, and sin with all its influence and wrong began and continued.

How can man get back to God? How can man reclaim his loss? How can man have again that which was and is his by divine inheritance? How constantly he has sought and failed! This Old Testament history from Genesis right through the Exodus reveals it. Right on through that law period of Leviticus, on through Numbers and Deuteronomy, and the record of those historical days; through the days of Samuel and the Judges, through the Kings into the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, that beautiful picture of domestic life; through the trials of Job and the great songs of David, it proceeds. Then through the Proverbs of that wisest of all men, and the songs which bear his name, and the greater prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, with the Minor Prophets of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah down to Malachi—those prophets, every one, leading up to the Gospel Story of the New Testament, tell us of the failure of man to regain his position with God. “Man became a living soul,” but this God-given personality had sinned, and on through these ages not only the individual, but

organised Israel and Judah, and all those who were related to them sinned constantly against God.

David cried unto God and realised that he was a sinner. He yielded to a gross sin, and then in the moment when that prophet turned to him and said: "Thou art the man," he said, "Have mercy upon me, O God! Blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!" Isaiah looked upon a world of vice and sin and said, "What hope is there?" Then a voice speaking through Isaiah said, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Then again a voice saying not only, "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord," but "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we do esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah, that great prophet of all ages, whose heart was broken because of his people, cried out, "O God, have mercy upon these, Thy children, who have sinned against Thee constantly." Thus we find the cry of all those prophets recognises the failure of man to live up to the state to which God had called him. Man was made in God's image; man became a living soul, but he degraded himself. He fell from his life. He became like the beasts of the field that perish. We pass through great forests and great rivers and see

dirt and mud in all their accumulation, when all about there are fields filled with the verdure and beauty, and the loveliness and growth of nature, but beasts wallow on because of their nature, and man whom God created in His own image fell from the estate in which God had placed him! And the great cry and sorrow of human life are not the result of God's choice, but the result of man's act as through the inclination of sin he fell from the estate into which God had placed him. It is the same throughout the history of the world. Generations repeat themselves. Hundreds of ages have passed since the words of our text were quoted, and still man's inclination is just the same. "Man became a living soul," but he falls from that estate.

Consider also this sad fact. The dumb animal is not conscious of anything said to him. You may speak to one of those beasts and say all you want to about wallowing in the mud, but he wallows on. You may speak to man in a wise and thoughtful way and there is something in his soul that responds, unless sin has gone so far as to petrify the very instinct of the soul. There are some humans no doubt in this world who will just grunt and wallow; who "only live to sleep and feed." They are "the unlettered herd." With others there is a response—a latent something which says, "I desire, I long," and sometimes it has the character to say, "I will," and follow the will with action.

To restore the great purpose and plan of God in human life—that is the question. The God-given soul, the God-given personality! Is it to overcome or to be overcome? Is it to die in sin and immorality and wrong,

or overcome and strive to win and gain the ascendancy of right and purity and truth? Milton wrote that great book, "Paradise Lost," but the world cried out: "Give us a Paradise Regained!" When in his prison cell, in the anxiety of sin and ignorance around him, John Bunyan wrote of a pilgrim seeking a celestial city, the world received a priceless allegory, not because it is a marvellous piece of English, nor for the rare imagery of a unique writer, but because the soul really longed for that celestial city, and the soul created in God's image wanted something pure and beautiful.

God has given to us a divine instinct and so we crave and long for that which we know we do not possess.

Now here comes the wonderful strategic point—the great crisis, as if all of life were on this earth and all of death were here too. The Major and Minor prophets have spoken their very worst and have condemned the world. There seems to be no hope, no chance; the advisors of the weak suffering Job go away in disgust, and say, "He will not listen to our wisdom," but Job realises that there is a wisdom beyond the wisdom of human life. What is that crisis? The crisis is the *Cross*. The world has never known its fulness, nor its meaning, and the world can never understand it. A mystery! But, "at the Cross where I first saw the light" there the spirit of God meets the need of man, and God calls man back in his creative strength and says, "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it abundantly," and man again becomes a living soul, and sin has found its conqueror. This is

the message of the Cross. That Cross is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

"The first Adam was made a living soul; the second Adam was made a life-giving spirit," "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The power of Jesus Christ to save the soul of man is recognised everywhere. It is only the arrogant, the thoughtless, the careless who are carried away by the love of wisdom, by a false and sometimes misleading philosophy, who fail to know the message and see the power of this great living truth wherein the soul may again gain its own personality in the God-given salvation of the Cross."

We are living in a very peculiar age. Every one is thinking of religion in terms of generality, in desires and inclinations to understand and know, but without definiteness of vision. Everywhere there are vagaries of truth. When a new so-called religious truth is to be presented, men flock to hear. Why? Because the world realises its failure to meet the needs of the soul. Philosophies do not satisfy. The very vagaries of thought of mere philosophy are the manifestations of the questioning of the soul for something that *will* satisfy. Men live and die simply to find they are not satisfied.

Why not come back to the simplicity of the Cross? Why not realise what it is to know that we are stewards of the *mystery* of God and that the very mystery is that which makes it priceless. The greatest intellects in all the world are the men who realise how little they know about the subjects they study. You know how easy it is for a boy in his first class in chemistry to go home to his mother and say "I know all there is to know

about chemistry," but if he were to talk with his professor who has spent his life in studying, he would say, "My boy, we are only beginning to understand this subject, and I feel as if I knew nothing of it." Some one said at one time to John Bright, "What a wonderful knowledge of law you have!" He replied, "Would, young man, that I knew the first elements of justice! I am only a student of justice." Great lives are overcome by the majesty of mystery; little lives must know every single step in definition. They do not know the realm of faith. Great lives work on in mystery that they may gain the truth and understand its scope. The greatness of a soul is measured not by its knowledge, nor by the recognition of its own learning, but by the consciousness of its own ignorance.

Insincere people who are not good are oftentimes discovered in their sin because they proclaim their righteousness. Humility is an evidence of worth, unless it is insincere.

God has breathed into our beings the breath of life, and Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly.

Then the meaning of the Cross is mysterious. Of course, it is. Who has ever solved it? We have books which claim to explain the doctrine of the Atonement. I have never read an explanation that satisfied my intellectual life, and never expect to read one. The strength of the Atonement is not an argument but a faith. The power of the Atonement is that it never has been and never can be successfully argued by a human mind. It grows in the realm of mystery.

On the Commons of Boston, forty years ago, they

arrested Dr. Hastings. Why? Because he proclaimed what they claimed was a sectarianism, but he simply stood for the Atonement on the authority of God's Word. They questioned him in one of the halls of Justice, and he answered them by this thought: "You ask me a question; I will ask you one." He said, "Where does the egg come from?" They laughed and said, "From a hen." Said Hastings, "Where does a hen come from?" "An egg," they said. "I thought you said the egg came from the hen," he replied. "Oh, well, I meant the hen came from the egg." "Do you understand it? Can you make an egg with a hen in it? Can you make a hen that will produce an egg? Who made the egg? Who made the hen? What is life? What I proclaim is the meaning of the divine mystery which tells us that life is unknown, and you men on the streets of this independent, frank, open city of freedom arrest me for proclaiming the mystery of God and life and Christ. Again, I proclaim, saying, 'In him is life and the life is the light of men.' " They let Hastings go and the justice of the city was answered.

Whoever has answered the question since? What is life? What makes life? Has any one ever attended any hospital, studio or laboratory in all the world where a germ was made which has life in it? Why the ridiculousness of it is apparent. What is life? God made man in his own image and with that image He gave him the mystery of the divine hope and divine purpose. Oh, men and women, you and I have the opportunity and the responsibility to live true to that Divine Image in which we are created.

The great question of the ages is not the question—

Who is God? Or, What is man? The great question of the ages is this: What are these souls of ours to do in the perfection of that great moral, intellectual and spiritual nature, whereby more of God becomes a part of human life, human thinking and human acting? That is where the simplicity of Jesus comes in. Men who have learned to be like God have seen the image of God in Jesus Christ. That is why these words which were written by John are priceless. He seemed to understand better than others just what the mystery of this truth was, and so he says in the twelfth verse of his first chapter: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them *that believe* on His name." And in the fourteenth verse of the first chapter, "And the Word became flesh." *God* was made flesh—"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the *Only Begotten* of the Father, full of grace and truth." God came down and was man. He became flesh that we might understand God; learn to live and think like God, and love like God, and learn to overcome in the righteousness and power of His life. That is the Gospel message of His Son. That is why Christ became man and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.

The question of the hour is, "How can you and I overcome and be like Him?" I read this week of a man who died in a small community in a western state. The article said he was a man of which his community said, "He walked with God, and everybody loved him." Unknown to me, to you, but not to God—a man who like Enoch of old, "walked with God."

The great question of the age is how this mind, this body of ours; how this human of ours; this brain, this soul can learn more of God and know more of God and live more like Him and understand the future and mystery of it so that when we come to die, it will be all right. "And man became a living soul." "God breathed into him the breath of life." "Christ came that we might have life and might have it more abundantly." The privilege of the hour is the privilege of your soul and mine. Statesmen after statesmen have said that the great question of the ages is the personal relationship of the soul to God. Jesus Christ came to make it sure and permanent; and may the life of Christ come into our hearts and lives, that living, walking and knowing Him we may have the abundant life. Then the God-given soul and the God-given personality will be able to say with Paul, "For me to live is for Christ to live," and "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." "For me to live is Christ." This is the God-given personality: And the new birth in Christ again "makes man a living soul."

XVII

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.”—ACTS I :8.

Great truths demand great faith. Great faith magnifies God and minimises self. Great faith simplifies definitions and accepts statements because of belief in him who affirms. The life corresponds to the faith, and is accepted as vital because the believer becomes the incarnation of his belief. Abraham believed God, and it was “accounted to him for righteousness.” We believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We accept our Saviour’s word, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”; and also, “I and my Father are one.” We also accept the words of Christ, “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe it for the very works’ sake.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father.” “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do. . . . If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do. . . . And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth. Whom the world cannot receive because it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.

But ye know Him, for He abideth with you and shall be in you."

A little later Christ says: "These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you, but the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

Again He adds in the same Gospel, as recorded by John: "I tell you the truth. It is wise for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. If I go I will send Him unto you, and when He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. . . . When the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall guide you into all truth. He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak. . . . He shall glorify me. He shall take of mine and declare it unto you."

These words were the words of our Master just before He was crucified. After His resurrection, just before He ascended, He said to the men of Galilee: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. Ye shall be my witnesses."

We treasure the last words of the great souls of earth, and of those whom we love, with supreme care. When with sane mind and thoughtful consideration those words have been spoken, they are ever held in sacred memory and have inestimable influence. Recently one of our beloved citizens, having died, left a beautiful wish and admonition for his children regarding their care for their mother and for one another,

and the touching words are constantly repeated in the homes of all who knew and loved the family.

Our Lord and Master states these words as to the Holy Spirit with gracious wisdom and profound insight. He knew that He was soon to leave those who were dependent upon Him, and whose faith had been largely centred in His personality and leadership. He had for this great world, and for the ever-increasing Church which He loved, a legacy far greater than He Himself could ever give had He remained on the earth, the Man of Nazareth and the leader of the twelve. A limited circle would come into personal and vital association with Him, but the Invisible and Eternal, Omnipresent Spirit was to make His dwelling place in human hearts, and every Christian body was to become His indwelling temple.

We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And may I ask this morning why we do not appreciate and appropriate the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, according to the promises of our Lord and Master?

The preface of our text is very human. The wonderful experiences of the resurrection had not taken from Christ's followers the curiosity and craving for the outward manifestation of His glory. They were impatient. Time, place and events filled their minds. When would this Victor over death and the grave "restore again the kingdom to Israel"? We can picture our risen Lord with calm and deliberate voice, replying to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power when the Holy

Spirit is come unto you; and ye shall be my witnesses."

The one great truth which Christ would impart to those early followers, so soon to be left without His personality and presence in leadership, was the truth of the reality of the Holy Spirit, and the power which was to be theirs through Him.

Throughout the centuries and ages of the Christian Church this theme has been without a rival, and still we seem to evade and postpone it, perhaps because so many have erred in narrowing and limiting and misconstruing it; perhaps because we have feared to tread such holy ground. The Church of Christ has needed this truth, and needs it more than ever in this age in which we live, so filled with its complexity of thought; so eager to know the truth and apply it practically to life; so willing to search into the deep things of human philosophy and material science and discover new relationships, adjustments and appliances of truth.

Because Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Daniel, David, Elijah, John the Baptist, Stephen and Paul were men singled out in their day as embodiments of God's Holy Spirit, men in whom the Spirit of God dwelt, they were men of matchless power. Others were brilliant, individualistic, scholarly, efficient, attractive, magnanimous. But these great leaders whom God selected were men who had more than eminent, or pre-eminent, gifts or culture. They were men of holy life; men whose secret strength came from personal contact with the Almighty; men of whom kings and peasantry cried out: "Can we find such a man as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

Moses was forced to flee to the pinnacled heights of the Sinai wilderness; Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites by his angered brothers; David fled from cave to cave, pursued by an envying Saul; Stephen sank beneath the stones hurled by an infuriated religious mob: but the world knew and knows that these men were men of God's choice, who in life and death led in the reconstruction and reorganisation of society—men who turned from human philosophy to divine truth. They were men of power.

The last great promise that Christ made us, when men heard His words as they came from lips which the eye could see, was the promise of the power of His Holy Spirit Who would come and remain with us, instruct, comfort, strengthen, and accomplish for and through us. This power of the Holy Spirit was to be given first in the common-place duties of life. Those early disciples were zealous for the restoration of Israel's great kingdom. Christ calls them back to simplicity in service. What He needed was witnessing. The world knew Him not. Only a little circle understood the mission of Jesus of Nazareth, and the power of the Holy Spirit was to be theirs that they should witness, beginning where they were, in Jerusalem; then in Judæa; then to the despised and neglected Samaritans; then even to the uttermost parts of the world.

From the study of our subject we find that men have felt that the outpouring of God's Spirit upon a community has too frequently implied a great and extraordinary movement—one which is out of the ordinary; unnatural, extensive, exceptional, commanding—when

the presence of God's Spirit should be the natural expression of His indwelling power, that we may accomplish the ordinary tasks of life with faithful regularity and simplicity. God does not require exceptional gifts to do His work well. Not many wise or mighty men have been chosen. Many a man who has been unconscious of gifts has been used of God in the hastening of His kingdom. Ten thousand men had brighter prospects, and more brilliant training than Bunyan in the Bedford jail. Spurgeon and Moody were not youths of such remarkable promise. It is not so much what a man is without the Spirit of God that counts, but what a man becomes when the Spirit of God abides within him, and God, with His power, uses man as His medium.

The world has comparatively few extraordinary tasks to perform, but it has countless ordinary tasks. There are few extraordinary men, but the world is filled with ordinary men whom God can use. We have our tasks and problems, our perplexities and trials, our dangers and distresses, not only as ministers and elders, not only within our own parishes, but everywhere. But the people are willing in the day of God's power, where the Holy Spirit leads and guides the individual or church life, that His will may be done and His plan accomplished. We need the vision of the Most High. We need a fuller realisation of the presence of our God to solve the problems, local and general, individual and collective, the problems within the local church and the problems within the church at large.

"What do you do," asked one of our citizens, "when you are tired and worried and overcome with fatigue—

when the problems of your work mount up before you and seem to cloud the day and rob you of the hours of sleep?" "I take a train and go out to the Rockies. When I see those great mountain-peaks with their snow-capped summits, their precipitous rocky sides, and their noble ridges and peaks, I feel the very majesty of God crying out to me, and literally 'lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.' "

Well, few of us can do this. The mountains are far away. But the great ranges of divine truth are near at hand, and the Divine Guide and Friend is ever present and near, and the power of the Holy One is with us in the person of the Holy Spirit to comfort and direct, to poise and plan, to rest and strengthen us. In Him is the source of all strength and power, filling our lives with hope and joy and peace, and giving to us in our own humble sphere the actual power of the Almighty God, Who is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable."

The power of God's Holy Spirit means a hopeful ministry and a joyful, peaceful life. Paul knew what perplexities and problems were, and when he closed that letter to the Roman Church, he wrote: "Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit." We need a hopeful ministry, a joy-filled life, a peace which means poise, an abundant and abounding life which expresses the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. There is triumph in such character; there is permanent victory in such faith. Discouraged men fill life with fever and ague and pain, with anemia and melancholia. Men and churches run from such persons as from contagious disease. All kinds of envy and

jealousy, all forms of gossip and littleness find expression in such lives. They become friendless and companionless. Frequently in their loneliness they become embittered and actually forlorn. They even abhor self-companionship. Contrary to such sad existence, we find the Spirit-filled life, with the fruit thereof evident—"love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, self-control." The God of Hope is filling the life "with all joy and peace in believing." Positive convictions control lives; doubts are scattered to the four winds; men see and feel, and think and act, with the needs of others in view, and find the joyful meaning of life in service for others.

The power of the Holy Spirit is manifesting itself in all kinds of personal victory; things which would annoy and trouble are quickly forgotten and overlooked and unmentioned. The power of God's Holy Spirit is personal victory every day. Men believe in their fellowmen, irrespective of weaknesses and blemishes in character. We do not lose our faith in men because men fall, because men are scoffers, or unconcerned, or inefficient. The power of the Holy Spirit gives grace as well as faith. We read of Stephen: "He was a man filled with grace." He could pray for those who stoned him to death, and pray with a smile; thank God for the power of prayer, as he prayed for their forgiveness.

The first fruit of the Spirit is love. What a wonderful definition of love we have in First Corinthians, where Paul says:

"Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up,

“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,

“Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

“Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

“But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

“When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I am become a man, I have put away childish things.

“For now we see in a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

“Follow after love; and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”

The power of the Holy Spirit manifests itself in a praying church, and reveals His power in God's answers to those prayers. We talk of prayer; we believe in prayer; but, do we represent the praying church, and are we known as men of prayer? The theory of prayer may exist without its practice. We may believe in prayer and talk of prayer and write of prayer—but do we pray? Does God know us as men of power in prayer? The missionary world is filled to-day with men of praying power.

Many years ago at Northfield, when conducting a

class at one of the student conferences, I rose early that I might prepare my work fresh each morning. The man with whom I stayed was a missionary in India—quiet, unnoticed, and without special leadership in the conference. Not a single morning did I rise without finding my roommate on his knees before an open Bible. All the experiences of that conference, the men of God who spoke, the earnest addresses delivered—all have gone from my mind, but the living impression of that man of prayer has never gone. All unconsciously, he influenced my belief in prayer and gave me its deeper meaning.

It is said by one of the fellow-students of the late William Whiting Borden that one cold morning when a number of them as students were away together and occupied the same room, one of the number arose, thinking all the others would be asleep. There he saw this student, wrapped in a blanket, on his knees before God, pouring out his heart to the Almighty.

Prayer power is the power of God's Holy Spirit within the life. Scores of the problems of our daily lives and parishes would cease to be problems, if we knew aright the throne of grace and realised fully that we have not only the promise of Christ, but its fulfilment, for we are living in the day of power of God's Holy Spirit.

What a marvellous hold we have with the whole world through this power of prayer! Missions at home and abroad, all our varied church and world-wide interests may be taken to God, and every problem solved, as we pray, "in faith believing." There is not a single problem which faces our General Assembly at

this time which may not be solved aright, if we allow God to solve them; if we are willing to look beyond our own plans, and realise that God is far more interested in every detail of our work than we can be; that God is willing to correct any error and regulate all workmanship; that He would free us from all personalities and judgments, from all discriminations and prejudices, and speak to us in the living power of His own truth, as the result of our prayer-filled lives.

And this brings us to another conception of the power of God's Holy Spirit. There is nothing too great for Him to do. We are believers in impossibilities. He glories in the impossible. He shows to men the utter fallacy of their own working as He Himself changes the plan or project to accomplish a greater end. Quickly He removes one life from earth to heaven, or transfers one upon whom the world depends to another field. No man is indispensable to Him, for His great plans work out with wonderful exactness and superb precision, but not according to our plans and premises. We can "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us," for the power of God's Holy Spirit is ours; it has been promised, and He will fulfil. True, we must wait and expect and accept, and appropriate, but the presence of God is a permanent presence. His greatness is a patient greatness. He is reliable and steadfast, and sure and unchanging.

Our text again makes very evident the fact that the power of God is not an acquisition or attainment, but a reception. "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." "Ye shall *receive* power." (The Almighty is the giver; we are the receivers. His

presence commits Him to His task, and we are but to receive that which He freely gives. He will work in us and through us, and with us and by us. He will use our lives, our gifts, whatever they may be, our failures, our limitations, for His glory.

One of our men was taken sick and underwent a serious operation in one of our large Presbyterian hospitals. Just afterward we learned that two or three attendants were influenced by his life, and that one of the young physicians who waited upon him remarked that his life had given him a new purpose and new confidence in Christ. The power of God's Spirit means that human limitations may glorify Him.

When the renowned Moon, who invented the recent method of finger-reading for the blind, was told that he could never see again, he fell upon his knees and thanked God for the limitation of blindness. He then gave himself to the study and realised for the first time the countless thousands who were blind who could never know God's truth. He gave his inventive mind so completely to the subject that he discovered this new and valuable method. It is said that thousands have been converted as a result of his work.

The power of God's spirit within our lives means vision. "He shall guide you into all truth." What a limitless view opens before us as we climb this mountain of faith; valleys of which we never dreamed; expanses far beyond the power of the human eye to see—these are the expanding fields of faith into which God would lead us. The souls that know such power are never tired, no matter how fatigued the body may be. Like Arthur Ewing at Allahabad, they see the future of a

great nation won for Christ; like Keith Falconer in Arabia, they willingly reject the offer of a Cambridge professorship that they may speak to the Mohammedan world. Like thousands of our missionaries and pastors, at home and abroad, the power of the Holy Spirit may be telling and controlling force, which means hope and joy and peace in painstaking and constant service. Life loses itself in this splendid expression of devotion and the heart is happy all the time.

Lastly, God's Spirit means complete submission and sacrifice. A month or two ago I was leaving one of the cities of the Northwest. On the same train was one of our loyal missionaries, Frank Higgins, the lumber-jack. He had met with an accident on a Western train and was going to be operated upon. One of his men accompanied us to the station. His friend had been a rough, wicked man before he found the Master, but is now living in the daily presence of God's Spirit. He is appropriating the power which is transforming his life. Turning to his injured friend, and holding out his left arm, he said: "You know my old left here. You may need a bit of bone, or blood, or flesh or skin. Anything in the old left is yours." Then lifting his right arm, he said: "Anything in my old right is yours. I'll just stay back here at home and wait for a message, and the minute you tell me to come I'll fly to you. Anything I've got is yours; but you *must* live and you must have strength and power." Across the car, all unknown to them, a man of the world let a newspaper fall over his face and his eyes were filled with tears. In the moment the train was away, but I had gained a vision that night of a noble soul controlled

by God's Spirit, whose whole life had been given to the Almighty, not merely a dominating influence of friendship and love, but a desire to do God's work in God's way with his body and being.

Oh, men of this great Church of ours, which we all love, let us be dominated and controlled by the Spirit of God, that God's power may work within us, that nothing trivial nor small may turn us from the path that God has planned for us. There are nations to conquer for Jesus Christ. There are problems to solve with His glorious wisdom. There is spiritual development before us of which we have never dreamed. The outward temple of every Church of Christ is secondary. The indwelling temple of God is the important one. We may hear Him speak to us to-day: "I give you my power."

As I waited and prayed for a conclusion to this message, from an all-unexpected source, but from a man of God who leads our midnight mission in this city, came this message:

"It is impressive that the General Assembly meets on Ascension Day and continues till Pentecost. In arbitrary church days and saints' days our Church is not interested, but the historic anniversaries are dear to all believers. May these ten days of the Assembly be eternally fruitful."

(Sermon by Dr. Stone as retiring Moderator at the opening session of the General Assembly, Chicago, May 21, 1914.)

XVIII

THE SUBMISSIVE LIFE

“Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”—MATTHEW 3:15.

Eighteen years after His boyhood utterance in the Temple at Jerusalem, we hear the Saviour speak again. On the border of the Judæan desert, upon the bank of the sacred Jordan, He steps out from the shrubbery that lines the stream to look into the face of John the Baptist, who is baptising. One glance is enough. John has been calling the multitude to repentance, but there is no need of repentance here—this face is sinless. As Jesus stepped to the Jordan to be baptised, John would have hindered Him saying: “I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me?” In a calm voice of controlling command, Jesus replied: “Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”

In His rural home at Nazareth, He had long been “subject to His parents,” ever “growing in favor with God and man.” The synagogue had been His house of worship, save for occasional trips, no doubt, to the feast at Jerusalem, where thrice each year the great feasts were held. That beautiful valley upon which Nazareth looked down had kept Him in closest touch

with nature; His daily work had trained Him in faithful service; His home life had developed the quiet patience of His character; and the Old Testament had been His meditation and study. He had lived and thought according to the Law and the Prophets. The law-givers, prophets and priests of old had inspired Him with holy zeal and longing anticipation. From ancient patriarch, from judge, from king, He had gained enthusiasm and motive. As boyhood grew into youth, and youth into young manhood, His earnestness must have made Him restless at times to speak the word that was so needed to reform and enlighten His day. He saw wickedness in high places, hypocrisy, injustice, crime. But His hour was not yet come. He suffered it. Alone with His God, He was learning His sweet will, and the peaceful contentment and obedience of His life was speaking with irresistible force to all.

His young manhood had now ripened and He felt the inward desire to face the great problem of His life. Wonderful reports were coming to Nazareth from the great wilderness of Judæa, which bordered the Jordan. A strange and mighty prophet had appeared, who spoke words of reproof and judgment. He warned the people to repent, for the kingdom of God was at hand. He told them to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." All Jerusalem seemed turning out to hear him. Scribes, Pharisees, publicans, sinners—all classes and kinds—not only from the city but from the country round about, were flocking to the Jordan to hear this man, dressed in camel's hair, and eating the food of the desert, locusts and wild honey.

As Jesus in secluded Nazareth heard these words, a mighty motive seemed to thrill His whole being. It was not that long-felt craving to help his fellow-men more widely, but a soul-inspiring vision of duty. He had gained His new vision of life. Youthful purpose had become mature service. His place was no longer His home in Nazareth; even the dear mother and the loved ones there were no longer His special care. With the sorrow of leave-taking he crosses the plain, and seeks the fords of the Jordan, where John is baptising and preaching. As He goes on His journey, from the solitude of the mountains and desert, He gains inspiration step by step. The thirty years of quietness are about to speak. His training is complete, and in His own humble assurance He seeks the new prophet.

John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins, but they had probably not known each other as boys and young men. It is doubtful if they had ever met in recent years, for John had been a man of the desert and Jesus had lived a quiet life at home. John did not recognise Him as a relative, nor as the Messiah, but with a keen eye and exact insight, he saw at once purity and sinlessness. The nature that could see behind the pretended professionalism of Scribe and Pharisee, saw here what was genuine. The tongue that fearlessly and unsparingly rebuked them as a "generation of vipers," and asked them "who had warned" them "to flee from the wrath to come," bowed in utter humility before One, Whose pure and holy life silenced him, save to say: "I have need to be baptised of Thee,

and comest Thou to me?" "Suffer it now," said Jesus. These two men now incarnated a new mission of service and consecration.

What a marvellous Baptism this was.

See them as they step into the Jordan. There is no confession of sin in this baptism. There is no sin. John is baptising with water the One Who is to baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The multitude on either bank is stilled with wonder and amazement. Who is this Stranger? His very face attracts and wins.

After the sacred rite, as Jesus came up from the water, the "heavens were opened unto Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him, and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Then immediately, Mark tells us, "The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness." Then His temptation.

Our text reveals the complete self-surrender of Jesus and of John. The nature of Jesus actually revolted against sin; He had lived those thirty years in abhorrence of it. The baptism of John meant repentance and confession and rejection of sin. Jesus knew no sin. Yet He was willing to be baptised by one who knew sin, and thereby to be judged by a sinning multitude as one who also was a sinner, to be "numbered with the transgressors." Even John rebelled. But Jesus saw beyond the present event, forgetful of self-righteousness as He saw the sins of the human race. "Suffer it" was His word, the word that overcame even the scruples of the Baptist. Self was surrendered. It was the same spirit which led Him to say later, "Never-

theless, not my will, but Thine." The great Divine plan of salvation may not have been clearly and completely outlined in His chaste mind at this time, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness had called Him from that Nazareth home to His life work. Yet there was no self-assertiveness.

As John affirmed, "I have need to be baptised of Thee," He could have truthfully asserted Himself, and the words of this prophet would have been verified, for John had said repeatedly, "I am not that prophet. I am but a voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' There cometh One mightier than I; I am not worthy to unloose His shoes. He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." But no, He would not assert Himself. This was not His Father's plan. "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Self should not control: He was surrendered unconditionally to the Father's will. He had come to do that will, and His whole being was responsive.

John's self-surrender was manifest also. The simple word of Jesus was enough. It is hard for a true genuine life to submit silently when overestimated. Something within revolts. The propriety of fulfilling all righteousness was the explanation with which Jesus turned John's thoughts from self. Self had little hold on this hero of the desert at best. From early childhood he had denied himself. Sacrifice had become his daily soul-food. His body he had kept under. But this was a new test. He did not know Jesus as the Christ. His own testimony is, "I knew Him not, but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said

unto me, 'Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.' And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

Before that divine sign had been given, John saw the pure sinless face, and knew that this was no subject for baptism; yet at His command, he yielded. Self would not assert itself. His was a holy life. He had early learned to give up. Giving up self is always a remarkable test of true piety. How many earnest Christians have never learned this precious lesson, and what sad consequences the Church has suffered! So often in the midst of duty, when we know we are in the right, the Nazarene says softly, "Suffer it now," but we hear not, or heed not, His voice, and there is no fulfilling of righteousness, no heavenly vision, and no Father's voice; hence, we do not bear record of the Son of God.

Could we but learn to give up self *at once* life's tests would develop our character and we would control conditions for God.

Quickly John yielded; yielded against that which he felt must be right; yielded against his own best judgment,—but in yielding became a part of God's all-glorious plan, and received in that very hour the manifestation of his Messiah. Self-surrender is no mere happy ideal, but must be a daily, hourly reality in the life of every one of us. Giving up is the hardest of all our Christian duties; but what results would come if we would listen to the Saviour's "Suffer it now."

The "I will's" and "I won'ts" have been the hidden rocks that have wrecked many a noble vessel on life's sea. A surrendered life is a life where self is lost in

service, a service in which all is subject to the sweet will of God—our wills lost in His.

- This self-surrender emphasises the important, and leaves the unimportant. Righteousness must be fulfilled. To show the worthiness of Jesus or of John in this symbol of baptism was not comparable in importance to the fulfilling of righteousness. Formality would have said, "No, I will not baptise Thee; Thou must baptise me." But formality is not to hold first place. Prophecy would have been broken. There would have been no declaration. The multitudes would have been confounded; God's plan would not have been carried out. When form robs worship of the Saviour's individual word and direction, then the Church of God is robbed of power, for there is no vision and no assurance. The great essentials of truth must never give way to the mere technicalities of form, no matter how beautiful and blessed they may be. This applies equally to us as individuals. How often we lose life's real worth because we demand that which may be proper and right, but which is really of very little vital importance. There was something far greater than form or ceremonial here. We defend and demand it as if without it life would not be worth living, and all the time it is of little or no value. We refuse to comply with certain conditions unless minor details exactly suit us. Numerous opportunities for development and widened friendship go by default, because of our deference to unimportant customs, or our fear of slight criticism. The function of state which would increase our influence and reveal our courteous atten-

tion is not attended because we do not possess a new suit.

The force of our own inconsistency in this particular is repeatedly seen in the relationship of our business to the home. Many a man is so eager and strenuous in his business interests that his home holds last place in his practical affections. That boy of yours is only a child now; in twenty years he will be a man and a citizen. Business so absorbs your time that you do not know what he is reading, with whom he is playing, and little or nothing about the school which he attends; to say nothing of the character of the teachers who instruct him. He only gets an occasional glimpse of you, and then knows you as one who exerts parental authority. He may read books which are not worthy the name of literature. We ought as parents to know what our children read, and with whom they play.

Just here let me warn you that that realistic school of fiction which is telling us to-day that it is necessary to show all the blackness and horrors of sin to the youth that he may guard against it, is not only a false school, but is dangerous and wicked in its results. The curious and eager youth longs to test that about which he reads, and through the influence of such reading he sees life's day under a cloud and in a storm, instead of gaining the inspiration and clear vision of the pure sunshine.

Know something, then, of the books which your boy reads; meet his playmates and take a few hours to play with them if possible, and thus keep the boy alive in yourself. Visit his school, know his teacher, and let

her know your home. This will emphasise the importance in home training; for, after all, if by making your business the all-important and this the unimportant, you leave that boy even millions of money, and do not leave him character, that which you have accumulated for him will probably prove his ruin.

It may be impossible for you to attain to your ideal in the large and complete development of your business, if you pay proper attention to your home, but "suffer it to be so now." "Is not the life more than meat? the body than raiment?" Is not the character of your home and child the fulfilment of righteousness, which is most becoming and wise? Is not quality more than quantity? What your boy has is the unimportant; what he is, the important.

Self-surrender is seen also in Jesus' desire to live in harmony with God's entire plan. He was not willing to act independently. We see this in His expression, "to fulfil all righteousness." To accomplish this He was a part of the great whole. He Who is all in all took upon Himself the form of a servant; the One who was to work out the salvation of all men in His own personal sacrifice and that others might do their part. He did not say to John, "It becometh me to fulfil all righteousness," but, "It becometh us." He would work with others. He would have John feel that his work was ended relatively when the Holy Spirit manifested to him the Messiahship of Jesus.

During those weeks of trial which followed, and in the silent, patient suffering of that lonely prison, he was comforted in the consciousness of this very fact, that all was a part of God's plan. Together with Jesus, he

was still "fulfilling all righteousness," although Jesus was now preaching repentance, and his own voice was silenced. Co-operation is God's rule, not monopoly; interdenominationalism, not sectarianism. Christian loyalty has no narrow definition, for the God Who loves us, and the denomination in which we worship, loves the world.

The self-surrender of Jesus led Him to conform to the unnecessary, because He saw the necessity of others. By so doing, He affirmed the power of example. Why should the Pure One be baptised? Why? Because He remembered the prophetic words of the holy Isaiah, "Come now, and let us reason together—though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

He began to do and to teach. The public confession has always been an offence to some Christians. "Why unite with the Church of Christ? There are other ways of confessing Him. My life is consistent; the Golden Rule has become my rule of living; the teaching of Jesus my daily precept and practice. Very many within the Church have no such standard, and are inconsiderate and careless." All this is undoubtedly true, and yet no life to-day can consider itself consistent or pure when paralleled with the life of Jesus, and He let John baptise Him. "I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" "Suffer it," was the response, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The Church of Jesus Christ is a divine institution. By confessing Him and uniting with His Church, we admit our own unworthiness and His all-sufficient redemptive love. It is not our mission or privilege to

judge others, the hypocrite came even to the baptism of John, but his attitude and inconsistency had no influence in deterring Jesus from fulfilling all righteousness. For Him to have stood apart would have turned the attention of men from the theme of John, "Repent and be baptised," and countless ones who needed this teaching and confession would have continued in unrepented sin. The responsibility of a Christian man is not simply that of the deed which he performs, but of the attitude which he assumes to Christian institutions and customs. Example is not alone related to the negative command, "Thou shalt not," as seen in those words, "If meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat," for Christ's word and example were positive, "Suffer it . . . it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

We see the result of the self-surrender in the vision seen by Jesus and John alone. As Jesus faced the fiery temptation of the wilderness immediately after, and as John went on in his wonderful preaching until the usurping power of a sinful monarch imprisoned him, how constantly they saw again the spiritual vision which revealed Christ's deity! Hear John as he speaks to those early apostles: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" To hear him speak was to heed him, for we read: "They heard him speak and followed Jesus."

The Christian with the soul-vision of the Christ has a power which the world cannot have. Intellectuality, scholarship, genius, marvel at the simplicity of this gift. It wins, it draws, it converts.

“Like some bright dream that comes unsought,
When slumbers o’er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought,
And cheers my ravished soul.”

From this time on John verified his words. “He must increase, but I must decrease.” But the decrease of John meant not only the increase of Christ, but John’s increased vision of the Christ. Self-surrender was like the closing of John’s eyes upon the things of self, only that he might open them upon the realities of Jesus Christ his Messiah.

The words of our text teach us finally most forcibly that the life of self-surrender ultimately results in the right adjustment of all things. Christ’s word “now,” “suffer it now,” suggests or implies a temporary condition. The “now” points to a “then.” How closely related are those words of Paul, “Now we see through a glass darkly, but even face to face; now we know in part, then we shall know even as also we are known.”

What wonderful characters stand before us in the “now.” Jesus the Christ and John the Baptist, the one of whom Christ said, “None greater is born of women,” but these were the temporary days; this the temporary scene; this the “now.” Christ’s eternal “then” is heaven; the real life of John the Baptist, a life for eternity. The “then” of our lives was a synonym of forever.

Considering this, is it strange that the quiet voice of the Master replied to John, “Never mind for now; permit this sacred rite to be carried out; I do not question your right or justice in the matter, but give up, ‘suffer it now.’ The present arrangement is in accord

with my Father's plan, and by conforming together we fulfil the righteous judgment of His will."

John did not discuss the matter. Why should we fill our hearts and minds with unprofitable discussion as to life's rights and wrongs; life's failures or successes; the mysteries of an unseen Hand? Why fret over the uneven distribution of wealth; the sudden disaster, or the misplaced confidence? All this is the "now" of life. "Suffer it," the adjustment is sure and absolute. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

The life surrendered to His will may see to-day nothing but disorder and confusion, but a never-erring Hand is guiding and will transform this chaos into order.

"Careless seems the great avenger.
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own."

The story is told of a little lad who had just learned his letters. His father overheard him praying as he kneeled by his little bed. After asking God to hear him, he began going over his letters, "A, B, C, D," and then quietly closed his prayer. The father asked him what he meant, and the response quickly came, "I don't know just what I want, but God knows, and He will

put the letters together, for He knows me and everything."

What a picture of simple faith and divine adjustment! We, too, are little children. All life's experiences are but the alphabet of the great realities of eternal language. "Except ye be converted and become as little children," . . .

Let us leave then the spelling out of life's great eternal plan to Him Who knows everything and every one. We misspell and misquote and disarrange. But this is the "now," His final adjustment will correct. Thus the self-adjustment will be correct. Thus the self-surrendered life is the simple life, the quiet, truthful life, perchance the lonely life; but, "suffer it to be so now: for so it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

XIX

FAITH ESTABLISHED

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—I CORINTHIANS 2:5.

The text of our thought this morning is in the Epistle of Paul to the Church of Corinth, second chapter, fifth verse. We cannot have an objective service in this world unless we have a subjective faith. There cannot be a general truth recognised by the general public, unless there is a specific leader and an individual who incarnates that truth.

One of the great difficulties which modern thought is seeking to solve is this subtle so-called philosophy which is undermining the individual in leadership, and is seeking to make goodness a cult instead of a being.

Goodness is God. There is no goodness without God. There is no virtue unless some one is virtuous. There is no character unless there is an individual. There is no faith without a being. Paul did not say, "I know *what* I believe." A great many times he did not know what he believed, but he said, "I know *whom* I have believed," and the *whom* led him to the *what*.

The love of wisdom is the love of the author of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord (that word fear has the essence of worship in it) is the beginning of wisdom." Without God we cannot know the "what." The

philosophy of life must centre in the embodiment of life. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

A religion without a life is a body without a spine; a heart without a brain. There must be life and "In Him was life."

There is great need of a return to this truth, a re-establishment of faith in the Infinite God, and as we have faith in Him we will have faith in that which He represents and incarnates, and we will have faith in Him who became man that He might reveal God, for "He was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory."

Our text is the thought of a great philosopher, for Paul with all his practical interpretation of life was a man who thought far and thought deeply. There was no surface thinking in Paul's life. He had been a follower of Jehovah, but not a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. He did all he could to destroy the influence of Jesus of Nazareth, until on that Damascus Highway he was arrested in his course and led to know Christ.

But Paul was always a good man. Paul was always a God-man. He said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," and the man who knew God was the man who saw God revealed in Christ. He said, "My prayer is that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." "When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Now that

is quoted a good many times this way: "When in the *wisdom of men* the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." This is a popular misquotation of scripture, and I have heard ministers of the Gospel use it and have seen it in print, but it is wrong. "When in the *wisdom of God* the world by wisdom knew not God."

Now man's wisdom would have let men find God by human wisdom, and it does so to-day, and seeks to lead men to God by human wisdom, but it utterly fails. Sometimes it lasts a generation; sometimes more, but not long. It has none of that promoting, propagating power which extends from generation to generation.

The test of a great faith is that it is reproducing. One of our great scientists when asked to define life said: "Life is that which has the power of reproduction within itself." A great faith has the same condition, and a faith which is man-born does not last, and oh, how foolish, "like sheep going astray," a great share of the world has been in this very error! People have sought to follow man-devised faith. "When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Now why? The moment an individual, a human, has a sense of his own knowledge and the worth of that knowledge, he becomes self-dependable upon his own thinking. He begins to be an egotist. The less we know about a subject, the more proud we are of our knowledge. The more we know, the more humble we become. A lad in his first year in college on a certain

spring morning, when he goes out and fills his lungs and looks at the growing verdure about him, may say to himself—"What a wonderful thing to be educated," but a humble man will go out and look at the ant at his feet and say, "How like the ant I am in the incomprehensibility of great truths." The best men in the world have been the men who did not think they were good. Paul said he was the chiefest of sinners, but we know he really was not; but, some one who does not touch the hem of his garment in character, says: "Behold, I have attained perfection."

This is not mere cynicism; it is a recognised fact that the more we know humanly, the more egotistical we become, and the more satisfied with self. The less we know, the more we seem to know. The more we know, the less we *know* we know. It takes a great mind and a great man to realise how little the scope of his own knowledge and piety may be.

Now, if it depended upon our own knowledge and character, we would become profound egotists, and the world would follow the man who could demonstrate that he knew the most and was the best. But, wisdom goes farther. Wisdom is not mere knowledge. Who wants to live with a walking encyclopedia? What college chair to-day wants a professor who simply is an authority and nothing else? Wisdom is *acting* knowledge, and knowledge acting aright. Wisdom is the human expression of knowledge in the worthy service of to-day. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "But when in the wisdom (the acting knowledge) of God the world by wisdom knew not

God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

What is the foolishness of preaching? The mere repetition of a story? Yes, the story of a Life; the story of a sacrifice; the story of a holy emotion which becomes the incarnation of purity, of sacrifice and love, hence devotion itself, and in the preaching of that Gospel men find God! and finding God they know the truth! and knowing the truth, they live the life of truth and become men of power; hence, we cannot demonstrate in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

Now we know that human ability and human power do not always go together. A man may have superb power of human thought in his own comprehension, and still have very little with his fellow-men. Power and ability are not synonyms, but where a great truth dominates a life it makes that life great. The world may laugh at first, but the world will not continue to laugh.

A great scientific weekly spoke of the absurdity in such a theory as flying in the air, but that was thirty years ago. Men have been hissed from the stage of life because of their ambition for a great truth, and men have laughed, but that great truth has frequently attained. Belief has controlled this world; it creates faith and makes men what they are. This church is not merely a church of religious devotion, unless it is a church of a living faith.

There is no religious faith that is worth its definition to-day that does not solve the great problems of God's undying love as it is related to His omnipotent justice.

“Be sure your sins will find you out.” “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” The condemnation of evil alone can prepare the way for a salvation based on love and forgiveness. A philosophy of love that leaves out God’s justice is a dishonour. There is no faith in the fatherhood of God save in the realisation of God’s undying divine love. The greatness of this truth drives the man of egotism and mere intellectuality away from God. “When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

It is the sublime element that saves, because it sees and knows the sacrifice that must be made in atonement for sin. It satisfies the justice of God by the sacrifice of One who has paid the price of sin. That is the meaning of the Cross.

In a single word let us summarise and get this truth. We need to-day, as much as we have ever needed before, the faith that stands in the power of God instead of in the wisdom of man. We need the *re-establishment* of the faith of our fathers. Everywhere we read—whether in the secular press or in the so-called religious press (there is no secular nor religious as Kingsley has so well said); whether men are writing in Paris or in Belgium, in London or in Peking—that what the world needs and must have to-day is a wisdom of God which comes from the saving power of Jesus Christ. A great Buddhist teacher has just said this: “Our own religion has utterly failed to solve the problem of the bleeding heart.” The world needs a faith re-established which is demonstrating itself in the power of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ.

A friend recently wrote from one of the great cities of the world: "When I walk through the avenues and streets of this great city, I see a great hunger and a great anguish for something that is stable and sure." Yes, the world to-day needs the faith that is incarnated in a life—the life of the Son of God. The preaching of the Cross may be to the mere scholastic "foolishness," but unto those who are saved, it is the power of God. That verse means more than unto the "saved." It is translated "those who are being saved"—not the accomplished fact, the *present action*. It is a present salvation; it is the power of God unto a present salvation.

It all means that this old world *needs Christ*. Christianity has too often taken the place of Christ; the church has too often taken the place of religion. What the world needs is the Christ, the Cross, Salvation, and a Faith which can say what Paul wrote in his letter to Corinth, not only, that "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God;" but say as well, "I know *whom* I have believed," and I am willing to commit unto Him the present and the future, and to live and champion His life, as I incarnate and establish faith in Him.

My dear people, we are to meet later this morning at the Communion Table of our Lord. Why? That we may see again, and feel again, and know again the power of God in our very lives. This is not in the wisdom of men. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." Let us sit at His feet and learn of Him that we may be able to live and serve in the power of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

XX

YESTERDAY, TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW *

"The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace."—HAGGAI 2:9.

"Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses, my servant, commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest."—JOSHUA 2:7.

Our theme this morning is "Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow." The references in the Old Testament signify that prophecy means peace, and that God's voice in admonition means command. Thus prophecy and command are closely related to peace and blessing.

Eight great subjects are suggested in our two texts: *Memory* associated with *blessing* and *peace*; then we see *strength*, then *courage*, then *obedience*, then *faithfulness*, and all crowned with *success*. "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, and in this place will I give peace." "Only be strong and of good courage, yes, very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest."

* (Fiftieth Anniversary Sermon, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Sunday morning, February 13, 1921.)

It is not enough to associate the past with the personal or even the general experiences to which our minds revert at such a time as this. Our heritage is not a museum, neither a mere accumulation; nor is it simply past deeds, nor hallowed associations. True memory has to do with influences which have been, and as we look back we realise that "others have laboured and we have entered into their labours."

On such an occasion as this there are many reasons why we should give our time almost exclusively to the associations of the past, but Dr. McClure has accepted for this afternoon the privilege and responsibility of thus associating us in memory with the past.

There is also in our hearts at such a time an appreciation of the continued blessings of God, for "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God must give the increase." "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it." The blessings of God, as He has attended this house and this society and the church's organisation throughout these fifty years, have been recognised, and have been known, not perhaps estimated by the cold statistics of figures, or valued fully at all times during the process of our development, but as we look back we say the blessings of God have been upon us, and these hallowed memories are associated with the consciousness, as well as the record, of God's blessing, hence we are at peace.

The God who has sustained will sustain. No matter what the anxiety of life may be, the consciousness that the God of all this earth is looking down upon His church to bless, strengthen, comfort and develop is ours, and we are at peace.

The characteristics which grow out of these facts are worthy also of our thought. There are four: Strength, Courage, Faithfulness, Success.

God gave His people, through Moses, the law which they were to obey, and from which they were not to swerve to the right hand nor to the left in their exact faithfulness in adhering thereto.

If then the memories of the hour give to us increasingly a consciousness of God's blessing, resulting in peace, we should cherish as well these four admonitions which God has given to us.

We are to be strong; we are to be courageous (and such courage means to "attempt great things for God," realising His faith in us as far greater than our faith in Him), and with this courage which is not daunted by new enterprise, nor new endeavour, we should realise that obedience must result, for obeying His law must be the fundamental principle of our faithfulness. We err at times to think that God's blessing and His peace can attend the people of this age if He is not in their enthusiasm; if His strength of personality is not in their courage of enterprise. They forget that obedience to God's law is primary, and faithful obedience. No substitute for religion which disregards the laws of God, the fundamental principles of righteousness, can ever receive God's recognition and His peace and blessings."

Religion is not the expression of man's desire toward God. It is the will of man to carry out the purpose and law of God. It is the law of God; it is the righteousness of truth; it is the morality that accepts the true and loyal development of the home and the vows

thereof. It is the recognition of God's law in the spirit of reverence and worship, that honours God's day as a day to be preserved for the worship of the Almighty as the race worships the Divine God, and only can God honour the people with blessings, when such obedience is a matter of faithfulness.

This leads to success—the success of God, the success which is permanent, and every man must choose for himself.

“To every man there openeth
 A way, and ways and a way,
 And the high soul climbs the high way
 And the low soul gropes the low,
 And in between, on the misty flats,
 The rest drift to and fro;
 But to every man there openeth
 A high way and a low.
 And every man decideth
 The way his soul shall go.”

And God has given to us this law of love which with strength and courage and faithfulness leads to the success on the high way which is God's way—the way of vision and future blessing.

It would not be right for us this morning to take time for the mere figures of reminiscence or statistics of success. They sometimes speak other than the truth. Statistics do not always reveal the exact condition. It is not wise for us to repeat a large number of them to which you would listen patiently and forget immediately, but it is enough to say that God has signally remembered this church throughout the years. Fifty, more or less, have entered into Christian ministry. About the same number have gone into mission-

ary work, abroad and at home. We cannot give the exact figures, for in many instances they have been related with us to student life. Of the thousands of men and women who have united with this church upon confession of faith and by letter, some have gone to almost every country, either in some form of Christian service or in matters of business enterprise or educational work. Our sons and daughters have gone to every state in the Union, especially centring in the great west and far west. We have heard from many of them at this time, expressing the joy they have felt in this anniversary. We cannot read these letters without realising that a greater number of unwritten letters and unspoken greetings come from the hearts of those who have worshipped here. The record of the many faithful men and women who have made this church what it has become has been carefully brought to our memory during the many meetings of this past week, and will be a matter of record in the Fourth Church monthly publication for February.

It would be wrong for us, with the vast number, to call especial attention even to the few whose lives have meant so much to this church. It is seldom that a church has so few of its ministers who can be present to greet you. Would to God one of your former pastors might be in my place this morning and give to you his association of the past, but only two of the regular pastors of the church are living—Dr. M. Woolsey Stryker, who is in the south and unable to be present, and Dr. Thomas Hall, professor of a university in Germany. We have been led in the past by

men of noble purpose in life, who have spoken with truth and earnestness. Truly, "others have laboured and we have entered into their labours."

It scarcely seems to me possible that I have served longer than any other pastor. No one knows better than I the failures and weaknesses of the work, because one knows his own heart best, but no one knows better than I the joy of working with such a people, and giving one's life to such a task and such a future.

Perhaps we should turn from the past, save as I would like to read to you the linking of the past to the present, and the present to the future—the yesterday with the to-day; the to-day with the to-morrow.

This past week I have gone over carefully many hundreds of letters which came to me twelve years ago, for in the providence of God I am nearly completing my twelfth year as your pastor. Among those letters some came with vital force. I want to read from one or two of them:

"The church needs a leader who knows God, who believes in and uses prayer, who believes in the inspiration of the Bible, in the sin of man, the need of a Saviour, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Given such a man, who has received a Divine call to the ministry from the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands in the pulpit as His representative to declare His message, rather than to please the congregation, and I am sure a spiritual revolution would take place in the church and throughout the length and breadth of the North Side. This is the local problem.

"Then there is the great city which sadly needs Jesus Christ. There are but 220,000 members of the

Evangelical churches out of 2,500,000 of people—not many, but enough properly led and equipped, to make the people know of the love of God for them. They are not coming into the churches—but few of the churches are going out to them; so new plans are to be formed, new methods are to be adopted, and new leaders raised up. This is a mighty work, needing men like you. Chicago dominates the Mississippi Valley commercially. Its influence reaches up to the Canadian border, to the Pacific Ocean, and to the Gulf of Mexico. As Chicago moves, so moves the west. Its position in a business way is what it should be in a religious way. Shall it occupy this foremost place for Jesus Christ, or shall the influence that goes out from it be worldly, selfish and sordid? Who can answer the question? Is this God's call to you?"

I look back through those twelve years, realising how little has been done relatively to reach such an ideal, but I look with gratitude that in the providence of God I was called to work with you in so brave and so noble a task. The pastorate is associated with blessings which cannot be enumerated, and I shall not try.

But what of the present? Of the to-day! Yesterday brings to us a responsibility. How little we anticipated twelve years ago, or even six or seven years ago, the conditions through which we were to pass. What of the present? The hardest time in all, as we read history, is the time following the war. The war itself has the thrill and the burst of life and the enthusiasm and pressure of unique and single purpose, but after the war! It is like those days when fever has broken and the physical has been disintegrated and

weakened by the heating of the fire of the disease, and the physician, all calmly and wisely, and the nurse, all patiently, keeps others from the patient. Will the heart hold out? Will the body be strong enough? Will the spirit and the will have strength enough and ambition to cope with the physical weakness and weariness and pain?

The reconstruction period, as we call it, is the hardest of all. Why should we be troubled because in the midst of the great ocean, the world and its inhabitants seems troubled. Let us leave behind the swelling tides and this condition of turmoil. Why should we forget the past with its glorious on-mark and its future goal, just because we live in a day of uneasiness and difficulty? No, hearts of men are stronger, and lives look out afresh, and a nobler, holier purpose inspires those who trust God.

You and I have never had such opportunities as at present. What did Victor Hugo say about France after the French revolution? We get from his pen and his philosophy a condition of enthusiasm to hold on and to make the nation stand in its adjustment. Why does he picture that little group of alert minds, from all types of the people—the poor, the rich, the philosopher, the graduate of the university—meeting alone in that back room in Paris, simply to work out as youth some of the trying problems that seem to be the collapse of civilisation? No, they are searching for the foundations and building upon them.

Only the weakling to-day is ignoring and evading the problems of the moment.

This is so in religion as it is in law, in medicine, in

pedagogy, as in the halls of Congress or in the relationships of great international problems. The weakling says: "I do not believe anything." The weakling says: "I have lost my foundation, I do not believe in society. I do not believe in the church." Yes, and you are a weakling, but the problem of the hour is to stand firm on the rock foundation, and facing the past, gaining from it the present opportunity, bare your breast to the foe and give your life to the future in the testing of the hour.

"New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth;
Lo, before us gleam her campfires!
We ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower,
And steer boldly through the desperate winter sea;
Nor attempt the future's portal with the past's
blood-rusted key."

Oh, the power of the present when the ambition of the soul reaches out into the chaos, and grasps not at a straw, but strikes out boldly to swim!

The present is the test of character. It is easy to give one's self entirely to your selfish task, saying society can get on without you, your church can meet the problems and adjustments in her own way. That is the answer of the selfish coward; of the man of small and sordid life. Such men are not willing to meet the conditions of to-day with the same purpose and spirit with which they met the problems of the nation and the world. The spirit of Christ inspires one onward and challenges to the best.

Be angry if you will at this. This is the test of your character. If your anger strands you where you are, you will stay there, but if you will respond and face the problems and needs of the hour with a hopeful, earnest, strong and courageous soul, and set yourself to the tasks which are ours and mutually yours, you are then made of the stuff that has made the nation strong, and your age and your God will give their amen to a life that shows willingness to serve.

What of the future? I want to bring thoughtfully before you in the spirit of faith and courage, some seven matters which have appealed to me as necessary for this church to consider. They may not appeal to you as they do to me. I may be wrong, and in all probability I am wrong in some of them, but I am not prejudiced, insistent nor dogmatic. I am here to serve and you are here to serve. These suggestions, however, are not the result of the preparation of this anniversary sermon, although they have centred there; they are the result of years of thinking in a tent at the battle front.

It is necessary for a pastor to-day to be more than a pastor. He must think and study often into the midnight hour if he is to lead others in thought and purpose. He must be in the street, by day, and in the homes where there is need among the people. He must know something of the problems of administration that he may properly guide those who co-operate with him. His duties are complex, but constant, and his soul and mind must have a vision which constructs itself into a plan.

The *first* grave problem which faces the immediate

future in this church is our *relationship to the children*. The children of the church (the church at large, as well as our own), are not attending divine worship, and if children do not form the habit of church attendance, men and women will not be led to attend, in large number in future years. In many instances there are reasons for it. Some say the Bible school is a substitute. It is not. It is the training school, but not primarily the place of worship. The child needs worship, and if you leave out the worship instinct, it will result sadly for the future.

Our own church has here a real problem. This congregation is not a strange congregation, although many friends are here this morning. Our church is filled. It is so constantly. There does not seem to be room for the children, but the children must attend. Making a careful study for some years of the children's sermons in connection with the Sunday morning sermon in many churches, having practised it and experienced its influence, I do not believe, generally speaking, that it is a wise policy. The child forms the habit of going out during the service; adults are a little restless during the children's sermon, for only about one man in ten (perhaps this is a low percentage) can preach a children's sermon in such a way as to be helpful to both child and adult.

We have taken action, as a Session, this morning, and have decided to begin next Sunday morning a Junior Church, which will be held at eleven o'clock, in parallelism with this service, in our lecture room. One of the associate ministers of the church will conduct that service. I plan to go in during the service to keep

in touch with it as pastor. Members of the choir will have charge of the music; the hymns of the church will be sung and the church hymn books will be used. The service will not exceed the hour in length. I do not want any of you to go into that service and we will try to keep it to fifty minutes. It will also afford the stranger and those who are not able to get into this service an opportunity of worship in this overflow, which service we usually have to hold at Easter and Christmas season. This will begin next Sunday morning at eleven, and I want you to pray about it.

The *second matter is reaching this entire community*, not in denominationalism, but for Jesus Christ, as we may be able. This means the spirit of co-operation with every other church, who names the name of Jesus Christ—not in attempt to criticise others. I say without hesitation that I am grateful to God that our Roman Catholic friends have put up that building near us. If Jesus Christ's name be honoured, let us be glad, even if we differ in creed, policy and polity, and even if we see grave errors which annoy and seem to threaten. Let us freely and cordially recognise every work of God which stands in this community, and encourage rather than criticise every such work and enterprise. Let us then stand more clearly on the basis of reaching the entire community for Jesus Christ, and co-operate with all other churches, aiming to help them.

Third: If this church continued for twenty-five years, at our seventy-fifth anniversary we should have at least an active working *membership of five thousand*, who are worshipping here regularly. No lower figure

would be right, in view of the work which has been done and may be done.

Fourth: This brings up the question of *additional buildings* which should be built to meet not only the responsibilities of housing but *training* such a parish. It will mean increased help, and this church edifice, great and beautiful as it is, with such a parish, should have at least four regular services every Sunday, fully attended as much as this. Why have we relegated to our Roman Catholic friends the use of the church building four or five times on Sunday, when God says we need this worship as much as they? I speak this as a matter of prophecy.

Fifth: This leads us to another most important question. This church should have ultimately in her *endowment fund* not less than two million dollars. Our present endowment is now (by legacy and direct gift) about six hundred thousand dollars. We should have this six hundred thousand dollars raised within the next few years to one million dollars, with the full aim of at least two million dollars in mind. If the first million is attained there will be no trouble about the second million in the course of the next twenty-five years. It will come through legacies and by thoughtful gift, the precedent having been made.

Now just one word in this connection. There are many people who feel that gifts should not be given to a religious organisation, but that their children and their immediate relatives should have the use of the whole of their money and all its benefits. I do not believe it. I believe the children and family should have their right place in the gifts which care for them,

but I have never seen a case where money was left by a father or mother in large amounts to children, where there was not left with it Christian character to control it and use it aright, that did not do harm rather than good. I know this will trouble some people and their children. Nevertheless, it is true. If you leave Christian character with your child; if you leave character which knows how to use funds, it is well and good; but, if you leave money without character there will probably be shipwreck. Most of you are where you are because you had to work to attain what you have and had to make an effort most of your life. Add character to it and your life has been a blessing.

I do not say, take the funds that should be the funds of your children and give them to the church. Not at all; but, share your legacies with the church. I say to your sons and daughters, encourage your fathers and your mothers to share it with the church. Can you find anywhere trustees who are more carefully selected, more thoughtful and more conscientious? The hospitals, such as the Presbyterian and St. Luke's, are related to the church of Christ in their upholding and sustentation. All kinds of civic and philanthropic works, near and far, are born and mothered in the church. Let us sustain the founder.

I want you to consider this, for the man or woman who puts it off is usually the one who dies suddenly without making his will, or carrying out his intention. Since I have been in this church many people, one after another, who have told me personally that they expected to remember the church in their wills have not done so simply because it was postponed.

I plead with you, men and women with means, some of you who are here this morning, who love the church—where else can you leave your money where it will go on more worthily forever in the great work that emanates from the church. I am grateful that six hundred thousand dollars have already been given by members of this church, and I believe it will be increased to one million within the next few years and ultimately to twice that amount. I will never approach you with any degree of insistence upon this matter. My mission is another, but I will pray much about it and talk with you as opportunity is given or as your wish requests. May God put it into your hearts in this church to meet this great need.

Sixth: Another consideration which we must face within the next twenty-five years is the *pew rental system*. The pew rental system of this church and every church ought to be a thing of the past. You cannot have a growing, Christian, democratic spirit where you have a pew rental system, but you can have a proper system of designated pews and sittings and of systematic support in giving, which amounts to the same thing—a condition where those who give regularly to the church will have sittings held for them until eleven o'clock (not five minutes after eleven). If they are not there then, the pews should be given to others who wait.

This will not come immediately. It never should be started until the one million dollars is drawing interest from our endowment fund. I do not think the day is far hence when that will be true. I ask you not to

advocate it in any way now, but pray and work to hasten that day.

Seventh: Let us consider a few actual parish needs which face us now. *The active boards of this church* should be enlarged. They are not large enough for the proper distribution of the work in reaching the needs of our twenty-three hundred members, and there are many men of splendid purpose, ability and careful thought, members of our church, who are ready to take positions on these boards. We should do more work among the women of our community and city, especially in the homes, and the women outside the direct parish. This matter is the result of years of thinking, watchfulness, study and prayer. As I have studied this parish, there is a wonderful field here. Some one is going to see the need and meet it by proper gift and appropriation.

Spurgeon said that the homes of London needed the motherly relationship of women of piety, who could help them solve the local problems. This is especially true among the transient classes, so many of whom we have to the west of us,

We have to-day visiting nurses and many societies which are working out this problem, but a great church like ours should not relegate to the church of other denominations, nor to other societies, all the responsibility. How few of our people ever walk down South Clark Street or Wells Street and West Chicago Avenue, or feel the great heart-throb of the tens of thousands of people unministered to by any Protestant church in this part of our city.

We have a great responsibility. Why has God given

us wealth, position and the confidence of the people? We must work this problem out. There is the need of a building near us where at least twelve deaconesses can be trained by a two years' course of study to meet the problems of this parish and community. It would not interfere with the training school. It would not interfere with, but use and help, any work now done by the Moody Bible Institute. It is greatly needed in this parish to meet the problems of womanhood and family life in our very midst.

Our choir ought to have better accommodations. We have a choir leader, organist, and choir unsurpassed, who are doing a work for us, and as an example to the nation this department of work should be encouraged and aided. In connection with the building spoken of for deaconesses, this expanded need could also be met.

There must be a greater, closer relationship to the churches of the entire city. The educational work of our city must be enhanced and strengthened as we relate ourselves to it. Our long and honoured relation to McCormick Theological Seminary is a great blessing and asset to us. This church must be increasingly a church which helps the Central West, the Far West and our nation. These needs may be modified within the years, but should be considered.

Last of all, and inclusive of all, I plead with you to realise that Bible study and spiritual development leads in the development of all this work. It is not the number who attend the church that counts. It is the influence and power of those who are in the church, and who are able to build themselves up in the faith. Then your sons and daughters, when the seventy-fifth anniversary

comes, will name your names as those who trained them in the knowledge of God's word and in spiritual truth.

Oh, my dear people I would to God that we could work on with such aims that our church may become the centre where our sons and daughters may learn the most holy faith of our fathers; where little children may learn that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of men and the friend of children. Oh, my dear people, hear these words :

“Move to the fore,
Say not another is fitter than thou,
Shame to thy shrinking, up, face thy task now.
Own thyself equal to all a soul may.
Cease thy evading, God needs thee to-day.
Move to the fore.

God Himself waits and must wait till thou come;
Men are God's prophets tho' ages lie dumb;
Halts the Christ kingdom with conquest so near,
Thou art the cause then, thou soul in the rear,
Move to the fore.”

Then the words of our texts shall be true: “The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace,” and we will follow the counsel of our God in our other text: “Only be strong and very courageous, to observe, to do according to all the law, which Moses, thy servant, commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest.”

XXI

CHRISTIAN ESTABLISHMENT

“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”—LUKE 22:32.

It is very interesting to note that this remarkable sentence of Christ's followed the assertion that Satan would seek to have one who stood among the strongest of Christ's followers. It is very clearly related to the denial of that same man, recognising the human weakness of life.

We had in our Scripture lesson the thought that God puts humanity in earthen vessels that man may not depend upon himself too much.

Then comes another truth: The establishment of righteousness in the earth is not related simply to Omnipotence, but is established in human weakness, and so Christ said to the Church: “When thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren.” He spoke to this man and to all who follow Him.

This gives to us *first* of all the thought of the relativity of the Christian life. An unrelated Christian life is not a Christian life at all.

When there came to John of the Golden Mouth (Chrysostom) the consciousness that the heart-beat of the city of Antioch needed the handclasp of Christian leadership, he no longer went to his rough cloister or cave in the outskirts of that city. He was starving

himself and living a life of seclusion and secrecy in prayer and devotion in the thought that worship meant separation from humanity. He discovered it meant not only separation from sin, but it means contact with humanity, and Chrysostom learned this. In one sense he was a pioneer of social service. But, social service, for its own sake amounts to nothing. Social service for Christ's and humanity's sake amounts to a great deal. It must never be a substitute for, but a supplement of faith and worship. And so this man of God said: "Although I love to worship in the wilderness, and love the cave where I have eaten my bread and water and starved myself into a self-victory in keeping my body under, I realise that the great throbbing city of Antioch, with all its suffering, criticism, bitterness, murder and immorality needs a faith that I can give. So that Sunday morning when he preached in the old church, and it was known that this young priest had come out from the wilderness, they not only stood but filled all available space, listening to his message which has run round the world in its after-effect. As this man became an emphasiser of related Christianity, he became his brother's keeper. The suffering of his neighbour touched his heart, and he even felt the pain which the other suffered. That was a new interpretation of the Gospel which he emphasised and preached.

These words of Christ are the true definition of a Christian's faith. "Show me your faith without your works," said the old practical theologian of Holy Writ, "and I will show you my faith by my works."

In that recent book of Clara E. Laughlin's—

“Jeanne-Marie’s Triumph”—she has clarified much confusion of thought as to a fixed and vital principle in national service. She puts into the lips of the heroine in that dramatic scene of popular uprising in Paris these words:

“We say the diplomats have messed things up. *They* can’t make peace! *We* must make it! Every one of us must make his share—do his utmost, as they did who bled and died ‘out there.’ And we must make it in the same spirit in which they fought for it—sacrifice and service. Not ‘every man for himself,’ but ‘every man for others.’ Not, ‘what can I get out of this?’ but ‘what can I do or give, that will make the world safer and better to live in?’ ”

This is the thought of our theme and text to-day—not self, but *others*. This very principle brought Jesus Christ into the world and led Him to give His life for us. It is the *related* power of Christianity—“If you are converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

The influence of one devoted life to another is seen in the inspiration Wordsworth received from his sister, Dorothy. Of her he said:

“She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears,
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
And Love and Thought and Joy,”

and the man of those great human poems (perhaps even more than Tennyson) gripped the heart of those who read them, whether he talked about a sheep-fold

on the hills of North Scotland, or touched the beauty of a love scene on an English lake. This man said that this life-giving self in his youth and on through his maturing years taught him "love and thought and joy." What a testimony of a sister's devotion and love! It is the *related* power of Christianity and the influence we must have upon *others*.

No nation which does not bear the primary responsibilities of its individual citizenship and is not loyal to individual standards of right living will ever be in a position to help others. Conversion leads to brotherhood. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Now *secondly*: A helpful relationship to others appreciates the weakness in human nature as well as the strength and seeks to give itself to assist and help in the place of weakness. It is constructive. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The Church in her establishment is not a matter of form, of ceremony, or of geography! It is a matter of the relationship of human hearts to other hearts. It aims to make your child stronger than you are; to make his child stronger than your child's child, and the growth and development of spiritual matters is established in the earth, not simply by a theory but by reproducing lives.

The greatest criticism as to some so-called religions is that they are self-centred. When you tell me that a religion is not reaching out to save those in distress, there is no need of defending it, because any thoughtful man or woman sees its fallacy. The test is in the attack; in meeting the need.

Many years ago some coach on a foot-ball team devised the fact that in the attack the signal could be so given that the men in the line could be adjusted quickly, so that the strongest man would oppose the strongest man in the line. When those men quickly changed their positions, they thought it was simply with the purpose of advancing the ball. Not at all! The formation was such that the attack was made with every weak spot in their line recognised and a substitute for it in the strength of the strongest. It was not yielding their point of weakness to the other team, but taking the point of strength. It strengthened the advancing team by making the team strong just where it needed relative strength to the opposing enemy.

Now such is Christianity. This world must be strengthened; the Church of Christ must be strengthened in her weak places, and she has many because she is human. It is the earthen vessel of it—the Peter that denied Christ. We must not lose because of the weak people in the Church, but place in positions of strength those who are strong.

Usually the critic of the Church is a sinner himself, whether his sin is known or not. He may have covered it up. It may be a sin of some selfishness, of egotism, or pride, but it is just as much a sin in the sight of God. If he is a true critic of the Church of Christ, he will be a constructor. True criticism has construction in it, not destruction. It is invariably true that the critic who is destructive is one who has something in his life he wants to cover up. He is not a scholar, for scholarship is constructive; he is not a student, for he does not go far enough and study remedy.

Take a little hunch-back child who is trying to walk straight. Your heart goes out to him, but some foolish and unworthy teacher comes along and says: "Stand up straight—don't you know you are hunch-backed!" You see tears on the cheek of the little boy. Does he not know he was hunchbacked? Does he not cry himself to sleep at night until his little back aches? Another noble soul says: "My boy, that's right, try to stand straight. You're looking better." The little fellow forgets all about his back and a happy smile comes over his face and he tries to straighten up, and goes to the surgeon or hospital with hope and courage. The first is destructive criticism. There is no Christianity in it. The second is constructive. That is what Christ meant—"If ye be converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Again Christ's thought teaches us to overlook the smallness of life. It may be that some people have gotten into trouble with minor points. Perhaps an oversight about pews—something happened, and the *little* man says: "I'll never go in that church again," and from that time he becomes a man who says, "You know the church is not doing very much." There is self-evidence. Such things happen.

Such lives usually could not stand a search-light within. They become super-sensitive. The bank examiners tell us they discover a good many crooked dealings from men who tell them about other bankers that are crooked, and they immediately begin to wonder what may be the matter with these men. The man who is honest appreciates honesty, and looks for faithfulness and loyalty in the men in his line of work. The

best way to show your own weakness is to begin to complain about somebody else. There is something wrong in universal criticism. It means there is something there unrelated to the great constructive work of Jesus Christ. "If ye be converted, strengthen your brethren."

Note this additional fact: We can never have a permanent influence in this world unless our self-denying effort begins in the little things where we live. Everybody's problem is a little more difficult than anybody's else. Of course, Bobby Burns could tell it to us better than some others. No, we do not see ourselves as others see us.

Walter Scott said: "Teach self-denial and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer," but that self-denial must be in our own personal problems, no matter how small.

Emerson said: "Would we codify the laws that should reign in households, and whose daily transgression annoys and mortifies us, and degrades our household life, we must adorn every day with sacrifices. Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices." Not the great things, but the *little* things, the trying, constant, irritating things are the expressions of the related Christianity which will make this world see and know the Christ, and realise His power.

Our theme this morning is "Christian Establishment," and you ask—"Why this subject on the morning of the Communion?" At the Lord's table we meet in commemoration of His sacrifice and love. We are converted people. We have turned to Christ. Are we

here to learn to strengthen the brethren; to make other people better? What is the best way of doing it? Teaching them? Preaching to them? Admonishing them? Correcting them? Not at all. Live the life. "What you *are* talks so loud I cannot hear what you say." The babel of voices is the confused multitudes preaching to other people and defining instead of living righteousness.

Carnegie Simpson closes his excellent life of Principal Rainy with these remarkable words which well may be a testimony paid to the world's greatest men:

"The great service he did the Church in his day was by setting the example, and leading the Church to do the same, of a thoroughly high-hearted and grand style of dealing with duties, with events, with assailants. Clear as to his principles, in full possession of the practical forces by which the Church must be moved and guided, he brought to every occurrence, above all these, a grand resoluteness, fidelity and unselfishness, that lifted his cause and all who shared it to a higher platform. In all he did he was a magnanimous Christian; and by the grandeur of his impulses and the nobility of his attitude, he raised the Church's own conception of her cause and of her work. The great Christian ideas which inspired his action were seen in him undegraded by association with personal littleness, with paltry feelings and paltry ends."

Is not this what we need through all the Churches,—a high-hearted Christianity; conscious of the greatness

of the Christian truths and the Christian calling; resolute in the assertion of them?

Now do you know there is a wonderful truth in this. The more your life is filled with greatness of soul, the more you will deny yourself. The trouble with two obstinate people is that the one thinks the other is more obstinate than himself. Carnegie Simpson continues:

“Not with the bitter and narrow obstinacy of small men, but with the strength of great principles, of a temper too assured to be passionate or faltering or perplexed! One should pray for great men—Christian men of great moral and mental stature. It is the privilege of such men to strike key-notes, to step out and take positions which decide instantly how things shall go; then, the chorus of the rejoicing Church rises in harmony with their utterance, the strength of the Church moves and ranks itself behind them, and each man is potentiated into twice his own power by the impulse which he receives and the consciousness in which he shares. Such service he did for the Church of his day.”

It is the same service that the Lord Jesus Christ requires of us. By giving our lives to others and seeing that we are our brother's keeper, we fulfil the law of Christ, and sometime we may hear Him say: “Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.” Thus will Christianity be established and as converted men we will “strengthen the brethren.”

XXII

THE SOUL'S VISION

“And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw.”—II KINGS 6:17.

Dothan was a hill town set out from the surrounding country among the Judæan mountains—a point on the great caravan highway. It was known somewhat previously in history. God had spoken to others there and God had given His vision to others, but it was also where the prophet of God, Elisha, was resting.

Word about Elisha came to the Syrian King who could not understand why his every manœuvre and movement were known to the foe, and thinking, naturally, that some one in his camp was a traitor, it provoked the question whereupon the answer came—“There is no traitor, but that man of God, Elisha, knows what you are thinking and saying in your bed-chamber. He is a man of God.” So the King said: “Then, this is the man we must capture,” and he sent chariots and horses and a great host who surrounded this little town by night.

In the early morning the servant of Elisha went out and behold! they were surrounded with Syrians. In his fear he went to his master, Elisha, and said: “Master, what can we do—we are surrounded on every

side. There is no escape!" But, calm and strong, this man with a vision replied: "They that are with us are more than they are with them." Then he prayed, "O, Jehovah, open the eyes of the young man that he may see."

Physical blindness is never so hard and dire in its results as spiritual blindness. The souls of men are greater than their bodies. Men have overcome physical blindness. Why, if it had not been for a printer, stricken in his earlier life with blindness, the blind could not read to-day, but that genius, Moon, was able to invent a system whereby tens of thousands have read the Gospel Story, and know the saving power of Jesus Christ. They have read it with their sensitive fingertips, because that man who was blind used his limitation to the glory of God. Whether it be a Helen Keller, or a great musician sitting at the organ sending forth harmony and meanings that the world had not known before, there is something far beyond the physical limitation, for men have attained marvellously. But, spiritual blindness has no remedy.

The lessons before us this morning are so many, we must limit them.

First: We must remember that if we have this spiritual vision we may be enabled to see the unseen, and know the unknowable, and use the impossible to attain the impossible for God.

This spiritual vision gives us the *far view of opportunity*. There is to-day much to discourage, and the man whose heart is not inspired by divine things sinks gradually into a lethargy of soul and cares not, and opportunity loses her sovereign sway. He loses re-

sponsibility. He loses a sense of the chance which life may give. He becomes dull in his intellect, careless in his habit and manner, and loses the will-power to act. But the soul that sees attempts the impossible for God and has the far view. He is not living simply for a day, but is living for a future.

Many of the problems of the present day will never be solved by those of us who are living now, but by our children. The great questions of Europe can never be solved by a mere system, but we must work toward an end. With patience we must deliberate, and with patience we must fulfil, and our children will be the men and women who ultimately will solve many of the great problems. The great Cathedrals were built by many generations.

What educational system is worth the paper on which it is written without the far view of attainment? Why are we so anxious about the child who is in the first grades, and so careful as to the instruction which that child receives? And why do we watch that school in its development from grade to grade? Because the growing child solves the problem of the later student. It is the far view. It has always been so in government. We have just begun to realise that some of the statements of George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, John Marshall and Patrick Henry have been the words that are finding their real place in the moments in which we live. The wisdom of Daniel Webster is a wisdom which we recognise now far more than in the eloquent tongue which gave the world its thrill with his personal presence.

Perhaps, we should not judge the men of our own

day too severely. We must stand away from the high building to get the right perspective. Too many men and women are judging the experiences and the men of the hour without the true perspective which history must give, just as Wordsworth said so beautifully that time alone can assuage the sorrow of life and give to us the real purpose in God's great plan. So it is that you and I must see with the vision of the soul and with time-revealing faith. This vision is given to those who are keen in their spiritual sight.

Secondly: Notice the vision of the soul faces the immediate condition and present light of God.

Elisha was a man of God who saw victory where others saw nothing but defeat. With his calm and deliberate judgment he saw God.

"Careless seems the great avenger;
History's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own."

The soul's vision takes God into account and sees the divine.

Third: Notice as well, if you will, that *spiritual vision means material leadership*. This great host was encamped against the man of God. What chance had he? But the material was overcome. Why? Because this man was greater than the opposing foe, and was above fear of the human soul. Faith conquers fear.

Faith sees God and recognises invisible leadership. Men of vision and faith have always been leaders.

Amid the turmoil, and perhaps the chaos, of careless and selfish lives, there is a great deal of confusion, wrong and crime in our city, and in our homes, but when men of faith face the real issue, there is no permanent danger, for with faith and vision they become the leaders of their day.

Go back through history and we find that spiritual leadership has met the crisis. This is more especially true in recent centuries where definitions of God's love have been more evident and eminent. God's leaders have led the world in times of crises.

The Revolutionary period discovered men of vision and *created* souls who always saw God. Later the lonely Lincoln was on his knees alone when members of his cabinet had left him in discouragement. And, when the nation hung in the balance and a great principle seemed to be lost, we see this noble soul, as he kneels alone in his room. But God was there, and a spiritual leadership which drew the tear to the physical eye, put the keen edge to an intellect and warmed the fires of a great heart, and led a nation, and all was well.

Fourth: Notice, that spiritual vision has *initiative* in it, and this initiative is that which suggests remedy.

Whoever dreamed that Elisha could escape? The lad was right when he said: "We are surrounded—there is no chance." Whoever heard of there being a chance when a great general had sent his choicest chariots and horses and army against them? What chance was there?

But the spiritual leadership of this great soul had

initiative in it, and in initiative there was faith and remedy.

The darkest days face many of the nations. What will save them? Will organisation? Never. Too many of them are so counter-organised at the present time that it has become a tangled spider web without an individual mind weaving the web. All kinds of intricacies, and multiplicity of organisations will not save them. An ideal will not save them, no matter how it may be humanized. What will save them? Nothing, but the spirit of brotherhood and Christian leadership, and out of that chaos and blackness of the night a vision must be seen. What will save them? Why the vision that has initiative in it and in that initiative faith will find the remedy. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Christianity cannot save them, but Christ can. Religion cannot save them, but the Man of Nazareth can, and His principles of brotherhood, touching nation as well as individual man will give vision and will reply in the powerful cry of prayer: "O God, open his eyes that he may see." This thought leads to our next consideration:

Fifth: This vision of the soul gives to men *Power in Prayer*. This initiative is accomplished through the Power of Prayer.

Praying men believe in prayer. Men who do not pray, ridicule prayer. Men who have no use for the law, ignore and criticise the law; men who study and practise law, believe in law. Men who will not use any form of medicine or surgery, ignore it and criticise it. Men who save life by medicine and surgery, believe

in it. Praying men believe in prayer. Men who never pray do not believe in prayer. Why should they?

But the power of prayer grows out of the spiritual insight and vision of the soul.

Are we becoming careless somewhat in our prayer? Is it a mere matter of form, or a matter of generalised strength? Do we pray *because* we need? We always pray in need. Let a great blow come to our lives and we want a praying man or a praying woman by our side. Let that little child, who is more to you than all else, lie with a fever of one hundred and four or one hundred and five and doctors knit their brows and you say—"Won't you pray for us?" No one is cruel enough to say: "Have you been praying through the years?" Why no, you have forgotten all about it. Prayer did not mean much to you. A minister happened to be in your home when a blessing was asked, and your boy at once said: "What's that?" You have forgotten all about the place that prayer has at the Family Altar, but this little child is nigh unto death, and some one *must* pray, and why should you not want some one to pray?

Have we forgotten the power of prayer? The great volume of prayer that came from hundreds of thousands of earnest lives five or six years ago meant much to this nation and to our boys in France.

In preparing this sermon, I looked over some letters received from the front from the boys of this church, boys of different types and kinds! Many had the request: "Pray for us." Or, "We are glad the churches are remembering us in prayer." Some of them had never spoken of prayer before. Alongside

of those letters I read a few from mothers, in which they said: "We are praying with you."

Thank God for a praying people. We cannot forget the power of prayer, but it is so much harder to pray when we are successful than when we are unsuccessful. It is so much easier for a drunken man to be penitent than a sober man; for a man in affliction to realise the need of God than when everything is going well. It is easier to pray for help when your bank account is low than when you have an account with four or five figures from which to draw.

Lastly: The Soul's vision gives us *relief* and *victory*. We know not how it comes. Who among that Syrian host ever dreamed they would be led by the surrounded prophet into the land of Samaria, but the power of answered prayer led that great host, blinded themselves, when they thought they could see, because the man of prayer was the man of initiative, the man of emergency, the man of power, and the man of victory, and victory was the victory of the soul. Later the lad looked out on that force of conquered Syrians and sounded the bugle call, saying: "Father, Father, shall we slay them?" The prophet replied: "Slay them not. Give them food and drink;" and the lasting victories of this old world are going to be accomplished by giving the nations food and drink instead of continuing to slay them with the sword.

Those of you who heard that marvellous address on Thursday night by Mr. Colten as to the conditions of Russia will remember he said that the best families in Russia, the most intelligent and well-to-do families, are not fed to-day as well as our organised charities in

Chicago are feeding our poor; to say nothing of the masses who are suffering hunger and distress.

Those nations will never be saved by continued blood-shed. Poor, sin-reaping, cruel Turkey will never be led away from their stream of blood by the sword, even, if we must, in my judgment, definitely and clearly stand with other nations in saying that they shall not slay the innocent! They will never be led to a standard of righteous living and peace-loving by the sword. We must feed them and give them drink and save their boys, and help them work out their own salvation.

Yes, the vision of the soul is the vision of relief and victory. Thus the Saviour of Men died on a cross that the world might know the meaning of Brotherhood and that men might love one another. Oh, Lord, "Open our eyes that we may see."

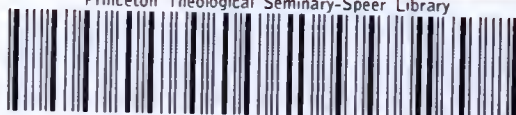
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